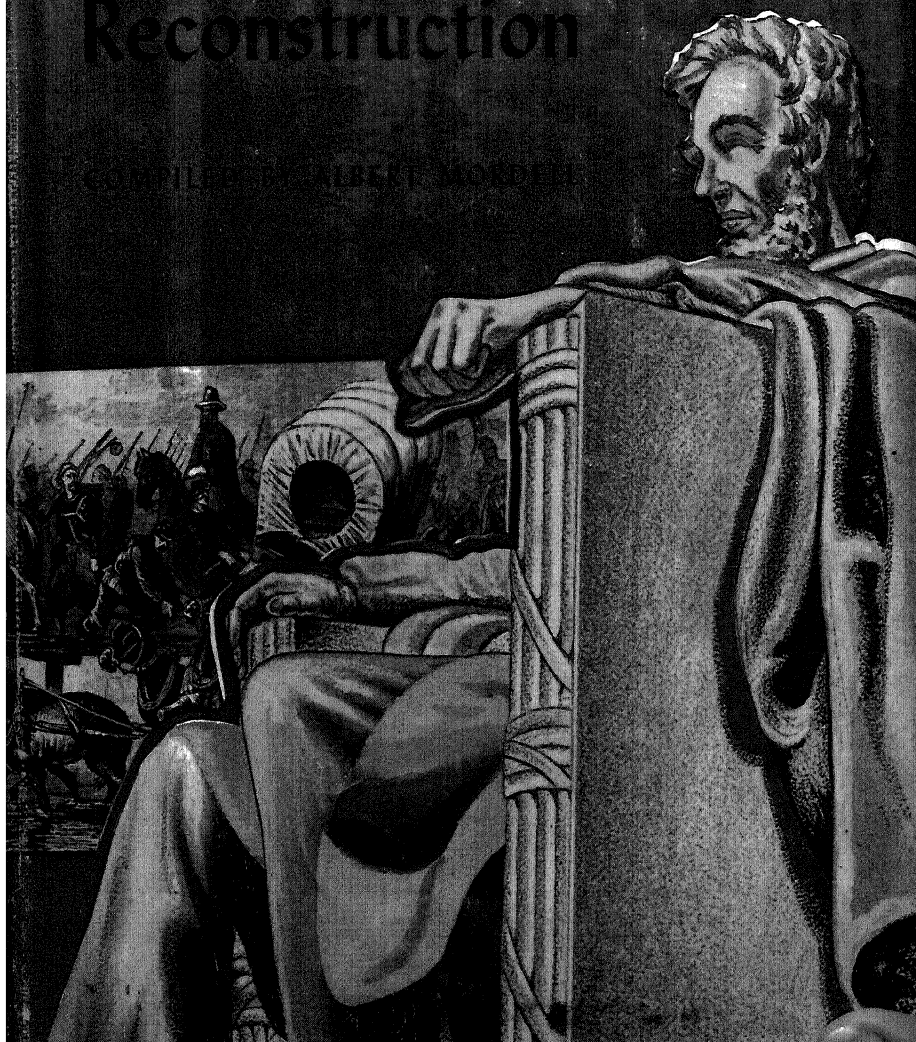


selected essays by

GIDEON WELLES

Civil War and
Reconstruction

EDITED BY ALBERT BORDEN



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CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

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GIDEON WELLES

Compiled with an Introduction

by Albert Mordell

Preface by H. L. Trefousse

Over the period from 1870 to 1878, Gideon Welles, Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy, wrote a number of articles which appeared in *The Galaxy* and the *Atlantic Monthly*. Welles was disturbed by various charges made against Lincoln, his administration, and their policies and procedure during the Civil War and Reconstruction, and began this series of essays with the intention of setting the record straight. As time went on, however, Welles expanded the scope of his essays; as they became more general, the public was afforded its first glimpse into the actual inside operation of Abraham Lincoln's administration.

The essays concentrate upon some of the most dramatic events of the war. How did Lincoln arrive at the fateful decision to relieve Fort Sumter? Who was responsible for the planning and execution of the expedition against New Orleans? Why did the President decide to issue the famous Emancipation Proclamation? How was his decision to free the slaves received by the Cabinet? How did Lincoln overcome the radical opposition to his renomination and how did the break between Johnson and his opponents originate?

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Civil War and Reconstruction

JUN 1964

Selected Essays by
Gideon Welles

Civil War
and
Reconstruction

Compiled by
ALBERT MORDELL

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PREFACE

It is fortunate that the members of Abraham Lincoln's administration were among the most literate cabinet ministers in our history. Deeply conscious of the importance of the unprecedented events in which they were playing such an important role, they sought to justify their actions to posterity in the publications they left behind. These diaries, books, and articles tended to reflect faithfully those violent clashes of personality and policy which form so important a background for the study of the Civil War.

One of the most prolific of the writers in Lincoln's cabinet was the Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles. Best known for his three-volume diary which was published in the beginning of the twentieth century, he set forth many of his impressions long before, when he wrote a series of essays for *The Galaxy* and *Atlantic Monthly* magazines in the 1870's. At first, he merely sought to correct a number of errors which he had detected in the writings of others, chiefly Thurlow Weed's *Autobiography* and Horace Greeley's *American Conflict*. As time went on, however, he expanded his scope. Over a period of eight years, his essays tended to become more general and the public was afforded one of its first inside glimpses of the trials and tribulations of Abraham Lincoln's administration. Since his diary was available to Welles when he wrote the articles, his assertions were not based on memory alone, and their accuracy has generally stood the test of time. Invaluable as a supplement to the diary, which they round out in many particulars, the essays have become an important source for the history of the Civil War. Here, for the first time, they have been collected for the interested reader.

Gideon Welles was a Jacksonian Democrat from Connecticut who turned Republican when he became disgusted with his party's pro-slavery bias after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. Taken into Lincoln's cabinet to give recognition to the many former Democrats who had voted for the President, Welles was opposed equally to extreme Southern theories

of secession and what he called radical Northern tendencies toward centralization. Earlier than most of his colleagues, he recognized the greatness of his chief, many of whose ideas he shared, and he observed carefully the masterful way in which Abraham Lincoln, the prairie lawyer, emerged triumphant over a host of enemies both inside and outside of the party.

What makes these essays so interesting is their concentration on some of the most dramatic events of the war. How did Lincoln arrive at the fateful decision to relieve Fort Sumter? What measures did the Navy Department take to hold Fort Pickens? Who was responsible for the planning and execution of the expedition against New Orleans? Why did the President decide to issue the Emancipation Proclamation? How was his decision to free the slaves in rebellious areas received by the Cabinet? How did Lincoln overcome the radical opposition to his renomination and how did the break between Johnson and his opponents originate? The answers to these questions constitute the theme of Secretary Welles' essays.

One of the main purposes to the articles was Welles' desire to repel accusations made against him during the Civil War. That he and not the Secretary of State, William H. Seward, appreciated the administration's decision to relieve Forts Sumter and Pickens, that the navy and not the army made possible the success of many amphibious operations were facts which he was anxious to place before the public. A hardworking and capable executive, he resented intimations that he had been a mere figurehead too ponderous to get anything done. In reality, his enterprise and skill transformed the Navy Department and the fleet into important instruments of victory. Therefore, it is easy to understand that he sought to counteract the excessive publicity given to the War Department and to the army, and in these pages, he accomplished his purpose. He had the facts; he marshalled them well, and the reader cannot help admiring the pluck of the Connecticut journalist who became head of the wartime navy.

Since Welles published these essays in eighteen separate articles spread over a period of eight years, from 1870 to 1878, his account might seem disjointed. In reality, however, it forms

a coherent whole. Two themes run through the entire series: The greatness of Abraham Lincoln and the dangers of centralization. That the President knew just when to issue his Emancipation Proclamation, that he approached the problem of the relief of Fort Sumter in a masterful fashion, and that he sought to reconstruct the Union without further centralization impressed Welles tremendously. In these pages, the Secretary of the Navy made it quite clear that Lincoln, and not Seward, was the real leader of the embattled nation. Welles, the Jacksonian Democrat, had found a new hero. If he overemphasized his colleagues' shortcomings at times, if he failed to appreciate the arguments of the other side, we can forgive him. He was merely trying to protect his hero. And he could not have picked a greater man.

Taken as a whole, these essays so conveniently compiled by Mr. Mordell, and presented in two volumes, constitute the Civil War memoirs of the one cabinet member who was among President Lincoln's closest supporters. It is fortunate that they were done so well.

HANS LOUIS TREFOUSSE

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INTRODUCTION

In 1911, a diary kept by Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy in both Lincoln's and Johnson's administrations, was published in three volumes. It had a literary flair, set forth portraits of notables like a novel, and maintained points of view that have been part and parcel of those held by subsequent historians. (The keeping of diaries by cabinet members was not a new practice.) Its fame is second only to that of the diaries of John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State under Monroe. There had also been literary men in cabinets before Welles: novelists like John P. Kennedy and James K. Paulding, and historians like George Bancroft. Welles, however, was not exactly a literary man; he was a journalist and an owner and editor of newspapers.

It is amusing to recall some mild controversies of the 1830's that Welles, a Jackson supporter and editor of the *Hartford Times*, had with the youthful Whittier, then editor of another Hartford paper, the *New England Review*, and an anti-Jackson man. Once, when Welles copied an editorial of Whittier's on dreams without indicating the source, Whittier called attention to the lapse in not giving him credit, adding: "*Dreams* are not always in the market, but we should think the said editor sufficiently a dreamer, and his faculties sufficient somniferous to manufacture his own night visions." However, they later saw eye to eye on several matters, namely, the abolition of imprisonment for debt and a hatred of slavery. When the Republican Party was founded in the early fifties, both joined it.

After Welles retired from Johnson's cabinet, he wrote a number of articles for the *Galaxy* and the *Atlantic Monthly* from 1870 to 1878, in which year he died at the age of seventy-six. Richard West, Jr., who has written the only life of Welles, an excellent work, states that the chief motive in writing these articles was to correct mistaken views held by contemporary historians. Howard K. Beale, in his article on Welles in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, calls the *Galaxy* articles "important historical documents." In 1874, Welles published in book

form an article dealing with Lincoln and Seward that had appeared in three issues of the *Galaxy*. The book amplified the original articles, and the subtitle tells its story: "Remarks upon the Memorial address of Chas. Francis Adams, on the late W. H. Seward, With Incidents and Comments Illustrative of the Measures and Policy of the Administration of Abraham Lincoln and Views as to the Relative Positions of the Late President and Secretary of State." Welles forever scotched the legend that Seward was the brains of the administration.

These articles give us an insight into the workings of the cabinet, into naval operations, and, above all, lead to a correct appraisal of Lincoln's procedure. Posterity has endorsed most of Welles's views. On President Johnson's conciliatory attitude toward the late "rebels" and the right of the President to dismiss a member of his cabinet, controversial subjects for many years, Welles has been proven correct: he supported Johnson's position and stood out against the radical Republicans who then wielded power.

It is not within my province to set forth the great accomplishments of Welles as Secretary of the Navy. He saw the value of John Ericsson's plans for the *Monitor*; he showed good judgment in selecting David Farragut, over higher ranking officers, for the expedition against New Orleans. In his article on the subject, he states that he chose Farragut because he was loyal to the Union. Welles was not in a position to recount the struggles and difficulties that Farragut underwent with his personal friends, fellow officers in the Navy, who resigned. One of the last of such encounters was with Arthur Sinclair, grandfather of Upton Sinclair. Sinclair subsequently had charge of the building of the iron-clad *Mississippi*, intended to meet Farragut at the battle of New Orleans, but burned while still unfinished. (The present writer has given a full account of the crisis in Farragut's life in his article, "Farragut at the Crossroads," *United State Naval Proceedings*, February, 1931, pp. 151-61.)

As the centenary of the Civil War approaches, these articles increase in importance. Although Welles was Secretary of the Navy, he does not devote all the articles to naval matters. He had had nearly twenty-five years of political experience, first

holding office as a member of the House of Representatives in Connecticut in 1827. He held various other offices, having been State Comptroller and Chief of the Bureau of Provisions and Clothing in the Navy Department, candidate for governor in 1856, and delegate to the Republican conventions of 1856 and 1860. Hence, he was equipped to pass judgment upon the policies of Lincoln's and Johnson's administrations, and to expatiate on the presidential campaigns of 1860 and 1864.

Above all, he saw Lincoln's greatness when he had been most criticized. Posterity has accepted his verdict on Lincoln. It has, more or less unanimously, admitted the validity of his criticisms of phases in the careers of Seward, Stanton, Chase, Sumner and Grant as a politician, and he is just in his comments on some naval officers and generals.

Besides writing a Preface, Hans Louis Trefousse has supplied the brief introductory informative notes to the articles in this book.

ALBERT MORDELL

Philadelphia

Mr. Welles in Answer to Mr. Weed

THE FACTS OF THE ABANDONMENT OF THE GOSPORT NAVY YARD

The Gosport Navy Yard in Norfolk, Virginia, was one of the most important Federal naval installations south of the Potomac. When the Confederates captured it in 1861, they also seized the partially submerged hulk of the U.S.S. *Merrimack*, a disaster which was keenly felt in the North. Thurlow Weed, the New York politician and close confidant of Secretary of State William H. Seward, later intimated in his autobiography that Gideon Welles had not shown sufficient energy in 1861, when warned about the dangers threatening Federal ships at Norfolk. To refute these allegations, Welles prepared his first article for *Galaxy*.

IN THE *GALAXY* for June there was published a chapter from the autobiography of Mr. Thurlow Weed, which contains, with a vast amount of egotism some facts perverted, and no little fiction. The author has a very fertile recollection, a prodigiously prolific memory, and in his conceits and details he remembers, and relates with a minuteness that is wonderful, events that never took place, or which occurred under circumstances widely different from his narration of them.

This chapter of the autobiography commences with an account of two visits which were made to Washington in March and April, 1861—an interesting period of our history, Mr. Weed describes not only his observations, but the vigilant supervision

The Galaxy, X (July, 1870).

which he exercised over the Government, and the admonitions, promptings, and instructions which he kindly administered to the President and various Departments. It is pleasant to read the incidents he relates. It is still more pleasant to witness the self-satisfied complacency and the modest and unaffected self-conceit which crop out in almost every sentence. That the autobiographer was as officious and intrusive as he states, perhaps without any intention of being impertinent, is altogether probable. Unfortunately for the accuracy of his memory and the truthfulness of his statements, many of his reminiscences are inconsistent with facts. The two opening paragraphs will bear republication. Mr. Weed says:

The first and only inauguration I ever attended was that of Mr. Lincoln in 1861. It was known that designs upon his life while on his way from Springfield to Washington were providentially averted. It was also known that the question of seizing upon the government and its archives had been contemplated. The few troops in Washington were therefore stationed around the Capitol. During the ceremony of inauguration I walked about the grounds, encountering Major-General Wool, with a detachment of United States troops ready for action, and two pieces of cannon posted so as to rake an important avenue. I soon after found Lieutenant-General Scott, with the same number of cannon (on one of which the veteran was resting his elbow), posted in an equally advantageous position. This, in a country so long exempted from serious internal collisions, occasioned painful reflections. General Scott assured me that these precautions were not unnecessary, and that they had not been taken a moment too early. All, however, passed without either an attack or an alarm. But it was not long before unequivocal symptoms of rebellion were manifested. When in Washington a few days afterward, I was awakened early one morning by Horace H. Riddell, formerly a resident of and representative from Alleghany county, N. Y., but then living at Harper's Ferry, who informed me that unless immediately reinforced the arsenal and armory at that place would be attacked and taken by enemies of the Government, who were banding

together for that purpose; adding that there was not an hour to lose. I went immediately to the Secretary of War with this information. He thought the danger could not be so imminent, but said that the subject should have immediate attention. I went from the Secretary of War to General Scott, who promptly said that my information was confirmatory of that which he had received the evening previous. "But," he added, "what can I do? My effective force, all told, for the defence of the capital, is twenty-one hundred. Washington is as much in danger as Harper's Ferry. I shall repel any attack upon this city, but I cannot hazard the capital of the Union, as I should do by dividing my force, even to save Harper's Ferry." My friend Riddell's information was but too reliable. The next day brought us intelligence of the loss of Harper's Ferry.

Soon after this, our first taste of rebellion, I received information from an equally reliable source that Gosport, with its vast supply of munitions of war, was in danger. Of this I informed the Secretary of the Navy at the breakfast table of Willard's Hotel. Believing from his manner that he attached but little importance to my information, I reiterated it with emphasis, assuring him that it would be occasion for deep regret if Gosport were not immediately strengthened. Meeting the Secretary at dinner the same day, I renewed the conversation, and was informed that the matter *would be* attended to. This did not quiet my solicitude, and leaving the Secretary to the placid enjoyment of his dinner, I repaired to the White House. Mr. Lincoln, however, had driven out to visit some fortifications. I made another attempt in the evening to see him, but he was again out. Early the next morning, however, I found him, and informed him what I had heard of the danger that threatened Gosport, and how, as I feared, I had failed to impress the Secretary of the Navy with the accuracy of my information or the necessity of immediate action. "Well," said Mr. Lincoln, "we can't afford to lose all those cannon; I'll go and see Father Welles myself," as he did immediately. The result was that Admiral Paulding, who was then despatched to Norfolk, arrived just in time to enjoy an illumination occasioned by the burning of Government property, and witness the capture of Gosport.

I do not affect to misunderstand the scope and purpose of the allusions to myself, nor the impressions which the autobiographer seeks to convey. They are in character and keeping with years of misrepresentation in relation to the abandonment of the navy-yard at Norfolk, and other events by which the administration of the Navy Department was for years maligned and wronged. This detraction and these slanders, covertly made, I wasted no time to correct, when employed in duties which demanded all my attention. Nor should I now notice them but for certain associations of the autobiographer, nor have given them a thought if they had been repeated by any anonymous defamer. Time and truth will dissipate the errors which have been industriously and insidiously sown—some of which pervade the pages of what purport to be histories of the civil war and the two last administrations.

Dates are important in developing history, and are sometimes essential to verify statements and facts. The arsenal and armory at Harper's Ferry were destroyed and the place was abandoned on the evening of the 8th of April, 1861. The navy-yard at Norfolk, as it is familiarly called, but correctly speaking, Gosport, was abandoned on the night of the 20th.

Commodore Paulding testified before the Congressional Committee, who inquired into and reported upon the subject of "the destruction of the property of the United States at the navy-yard in Norfolk, and the armory at Harper's Ferry," as follows:

I was sent to Norfolk on the 16th of April, 1861. Under verbal orders of the Secretary of the Navy, left the Navy Department that evening and arrived at Norfolk the following afternoon, conveying despatches to Commodore McCauley, and with directions from the Secretary of the Navy to confer with him and Commodore Pendergast with reference to the safety of the public property at the Norfolk Navy-yard. I performed that duty, and left Norfolk in the Baltimore boat on the afternoon of the 17th of April.

He further testifies that he returned and reported to me, and that immediately after,

On the afternoon of April 18th, I received from the Secretary of the Navy instructions to proceed to Norfolk with the Pawnee. I left Washington on the evening of the 19th of April in the Pawnee, and arrived at Fortress Monroe on the following day at about four o'clock.

Mr. Weed says, after his friend Riddell awakened him early one morning:

The next day brought us intelligence of the loss of Harper's Ferry. *Soon after* this, our first taste of rebellion, I received information from an equally reliable source that Gosport, with its vast supply of munitions of war, was in danger. Of this I informed the Secretary of the Navy at the breakfast table of Willard's Hotel. Believing from his manner that he attached but little importance to my information, I reiterated it with emphasis, etc.

This interview, if it ever took place, of which, however, I have no recollection, must have been on the morning of the 19th, succeeding the abandonment of Harper's Ferry, which was on the 18th of April. When, therefore, Mr. Weed came to me with his "reliable information," which was no news to me, whatever it may have been to him, my "manner" did not indicate excitement or sensational alarm. I heard his story, and its reiteration with emphasis, calmly and, I trust, respectfully; for I knew, what he did not know, that Commodore Paulding had at that moment my orders in his pocket, directing him to proceed to Norfolk, investing him with full power to protect the public property, and that he had been and was then collecting his forces to proceed as soon as his vessel and men could be got ready for the service. These facts I did not communicate to Mr. Weed, although he had given me what information he possessed.

The President, on whom Mr. Weed represents he called with his information, was cognizant of these facts, and appears to have been equally uncommunicative, and, in order to rid himself of an inquisitive and perhaps troublesome gentleman who had no information to impart, dismissed him with the

remark that he would see me. In point of fact, the President and myself had been two or three times in consultation the preceding day—one a very lengthened interview with General Scott—on the subject of the danger and defences of Norfolk Navy-yard.

These frequent interviews were necessary in consequence of the avalanche of duties and difficulties that were precipitated upon us in that eventful week, which commenced with the fall of Sumter and the issuing of the proclamation calling for troops; but was especially necessary on the 18th, from the fact that Chief Engineer Isherwood had arrived on the morning of that day, and reported the strange and unaccountable conduct of Commodore McCauley, and the unfortunate condition of affairs at the yard under his command. Immediately on receiving this report, I went with the President to General Scott with a view of getting a military force and a competent military officer to defend the station. I had some time previously had interviews with General Scott on this subject, who uniformly said, as he now repeated, that he would send troops for the shore defence, as was his duty, if he had them. But Congress had provided neither men nor means for this great and terrible crisis. On this occasion he bewailed the necessity which compelled him to leave Harper's Ferry and its armory and arms to destruction—a military station in which his duty and his honor as the head of the army were concerned; but he had no men to send for their protection, and the Massachusetts volunteers, who were directed to report there and at Fortress Monroe, had none of them arrived. The property there and at the navy-yard must, he said, be sacrificed.

Mr. Weed says he "repaired to the White House" after seeing me. Mr. Lincoln, however, had driven out to visit some fortifications. There were, unfortunately for the autobiography, no fortifications about Washington at that time for the President to drive out and visit. Mr. Weed remembers too much, an unhappy infirmity with which he is sadly afflicted. As the President was "out," he called "early the next morning," the 20th, "stated the danger that threatened Gosport, and how, as I feared, I had failed to impress the Secretary of the Navy with

the accuracy of my information or the necessity of immediate action." Commodore Paulding quietly left Washington in the Pawnee on the evening of the 19th, and was well on his way to Norfolk when this interview with the President purports to have taken place. I know not that the President was at that time aware of this fact, but he was fully conversant with all of the attending circumstances, at the same time knowing that special injunctions were imposed to give no publicity to the movement. He must have been amused when Mr. Weed related his interview with me, my manner, and his fears that he had failed to impress me. The President on his part was reticent as myself; but allowed the author of the autobiography to cheer himself with the belief that he had impressed the President, if he had failed with the Secretary of the Navy, by an assurance that we could not afford to lose all those cannon, and he would "see Father Welles."

The appellation "Father Welles" was at a later period often applied to me by naval officers, sailors, and others, but not at that early period of the administration, and never, that I am aware of, by President Lincoln. Nor would he then or at any time, be likely to use the expression as regards myself, when three of the members of the Cabinet—Messrs. Bates, Cameron, and Seward—were my seniors. The term was sometimes kindly and affectionately applied by him to Attorney-General Bates, the eldest of his political family, for whom he had a tender regard. The remark which is quoted in the autobiography may have been made by the President; but it is more likely to be the offspring of that prolific and fertile memory to which I have adverted, which could recollect details that never took place, and manufacture facts with facility for any emergency.

Mr. Riddell may have awakened Mr. Weed "early one morning," and he may have gone immediately to Secretary Cameron with tidings that Harper's Ferry was in danger; but in doing so he communicated no more information than when he told the Secretary of the Navy that Gosport was in danger. Mr. Cameron, like the Secretary of the Navy, was not as much excited as Mr. Weed expected he would be. He therefore went to General Scott, who "promptly said that my information was confirmatory

of that which he had received the previous evening." Each of the Secretaries might with a truth have given him the same answer as General Scott, for he told them nothing new. The truth is, the Government had other, earlier, and more authentic sources of information than Mr. Weed. The information which the Departments received did not always come through him, strange as it may seem to him, and to those who read and credit the pages of his autobiography. Despatches sometimes reached the Secretaries direct, without passing under his inspection, or through his hands, and there were, as he well knows, departments of the government which never made him their confidant. I do not question that he was as active, as officious, and as intrusive as he describes; but he was of vastly less consequence than his imagination led him to suppose. In the matter of the autobiography, due allowance must be made for one who is the hero of his own story, and a mind never endowed with a very scrupulous regard for facts in a partisan practice of half a century of fierce and reckless party warfare.

I had not, as already stated, during the eventful years of the war, the leisure to correct the errors and misrepresentations which were made by unscrupulous partisans, some of which have been, in ignorance of the facts, incorporated into what purport to be the histories of those times.

This occasion is not inappropriate to bring out the facts in relation to the condition and capture of the navy-yard at Norfolk, the policy of the Government, the course which the Administration pursued, and the attending circumstances, all of which have been much misrepresented and only imperfectly understood.

At the time of Mr. Lincoln's inauguration, and for several weeks thereafter, he and others indulged the hope of a peaceful solution of the pending questions, and a desire, amounting almost to a belief, that Virginia and the other border States might, by forbearance and a calm and conciliatory policy, continue faithful to the Union. Two-thirds of the Convention then in session at Richmond were elected as opponents of secession, and the people of that State were in about that proportion opposed to it. But the Union element, in the Convention and out

of it, was passive and acquiescent, while the secessionists were positive, aggressive, and violent; and, as is almost always the case in revolutionary times, the aggressive force continually increased in strength and exactions at the expense of those who were peacefully inclined. It was charged that the new Administration was inimical to the South, was hostile to Southern institutions, and would use its power to deprive the people and States of their rights by coercive measures. In order to counteract these unfounded prejudices and to do away with these misrepresentations, which were embarrassing to the Administration just launched upon a turbulent sea, and to conciliate and satisfy the people of Virginia and the Convention then in session, the President desired that there should be no step taken which would give offence; and, to prevent any cause of irritation, he desired that not even the ordinary local political changes, which are usual on a change of administration, should be made. In regard to the navy-yard at Norfolk, he was particularly solicitous that there should be no action taken which would indicate a want of confidence in the authorities and people, or which would be likely to beget distrust. No ships were to be withdrawn, no fortifications erected. We had reports from that station and from others that there were ardent secessionists among the civil and naval officers, and assurances, on the other hand, that most of them were patriotic and supporters of the Union. It was difficult, there and elsewhere, to distinguish between the true and the disaffected officers of the service. Some had already sent in their resignations; others, it was understood, proposed to do so if any conflict took place between the State and Federal Governments; and there were many who occupied an equivocal and doubtful position. Among those who hesitated to avow themselves on either side, and were undetermined how to act, were officers who subsequently took a firm stand and rendered gallant service in the war which followed.

Commodore McCauley, who was in command of the Norfolk yard, I had personally known in former years, and esteemed as a worthy and estimable officer. His reputation as a Union man in 1861 was good, and all my inquiries in relation to him were satisfactorily answered. His patriotism and fidelity were beyond

doubt; but events proved that he was unequal to the position he occupied in that emergency.

Commodore Alden, whom I sent to Norfolk in special trust on the 11th of April, with orders to take command of and bring out the Merrimack, but who was prevented by Commodore McCauley, wrote me the succeeding November, six months after the abandonment of the navy-yard, in regard to Commodore McCauley:

I believe, indeed I know, that the old hero who has fought so well for his country could have none but the best and purest motives in all he did; but he was surrounded by *masked traitors* whom he did not suspect, and in whose advice he thought there was safety. The cry, too, was raised, and in everybody's mouth, officers and all, "If they move that ship, the Merrimack, it will bring on a collision with the people outside, who are all ready, if anything of the kind is done, to take the yard." Besides, Commodore Paulding, whom I accompanied to Norfolk, expressed the idea that if we could not do anything better, she (the Merrimack), with her guns on board, would make a good battery for the defence of the yard. This opinion influenced Commodore McCauley not a little.

If Commodore McCauley had not the activity and energy which were essential to a revolutionary period, he was an old trusted officer, who had not served out one-third his term as commandant of the station. To remove him would have necessitated extensive changes, involving an entire reorganization of the government of the yard, and consequently a departure from the President's policy of permitting things to continue undisturbed in Virginia. Whatever negotiations, complications, or correspondence were going forward at that period to insure harmony and peace, though connected more or less with the occurrences here related, need not be now detailed. It is sufficient to say that no military force was ordered to Norfolk; no fortifications were erected for the defence of the navy-yard; a passive course was enjoined upon the Navy Department, and the military also, in relation to that station. A large amount

of property had been accumulated at the navy-yard, and a number of vessels were then in a dismantled condition, without armament or crews. To attempt to refit them or put them in condition to be removed, or to remove the stores, would, it was thought, indicate distrust, and give the secessionists an argument to be used against the Administration, accused of a design to subjugate and coerce Virginia.

Not until the last of March did the President fully and finally decide to attempt to relieve Fort Sumter. He never proposed or intended to order it to be evacuated; but certain assurances and committals which had been made embarrassed him, and a hope that in some way there would be an adjustment of difficulties without a resort to arms caused him to hesitate, and delayed his final decision. The condition of that fort and the garrison had received immediate attention after the inauguration, and the Cabinet was earnest and almost unanimous for its prompt reinforcement. Numerous consultations were held on the subject, to some of which Generals Scott and Totten were invited. The deliberate and united opinion of these officers was unqualified against any attempt to reinforce or supply the garrison, which they pronounced utterly impracticable, and which, if attempted, would result in a failure, with a waste of blood and treasure.

These arguments, and an elaborate written report which they submitted by order of the President, had an influence on him and several of the members of the Cabinet, who felt that the opinions of military men should have weight on a military question. It is generally known, however, that one of the members of the Cabinet had from the first opposed any attempt to relieve the garrison, and one had been and continued throughout persistent and emphatic in its favor. For some days the President was undetermined what course to take. Delay was moreover important until the Administration could get in working order; but the supplies at Sumter were getting short, and he finally decided, on the 30th of March, that an effort should be made to send supplies to the garrison.

The attempt to relieve Major Anderson, though a military question, was a political necessity. It became a duty of the Gov-

ernment after all conciliatory efforts were exhausted. The expedition to supply the garrison was under the direction of the War Department, in which the navy coöperated. But the whole combined military and naval force of the Government was feeble. Congress had adjourned on the 4th of March without making any provision for increasing the naval strength, although the danger of a civil war was imminent; no increased appropriations were made. The navy was restricted to a strictly peace establishment, with a force limited by law to eight thousand five hundred men. But five vessels were in commission in all our Atlantic ports.

The Navy Department had quietly commenced recruiting, and on the 29th of March Commodore Breese, then in command of the Brooklyn Navy-yard, was ordered to send two hundred and fifty seamen to Norfolk, a vulnerable point if Virginia should attempt to secede. On the next day, however, the 30th of March, the President informed me that he had come to the conclusion that supplies should be sent to Major Anderson, and, if resistance was made, that the garrison should be reinforced. To execute, and, if it became necessary, to enforce his orders, a naval force would be required. As we then had but three naval steamers that were available—two having a few days previous been sent to the Gulf by special request of General Scott—the *Harriet Lane*, a revenue cutter, was transferred by the Secretary of the Treasury to the navy to form a part of the expedition. The two hundred and fifty seamen on the receiving-ship at Brooklyn, whom I had directed on the 29th to be sent to Norfolk, were transferred to the *Powhatan*, which was to be the flag-ship of the squadron. The *Pocahontas*, one of the vessels of the Home Squadron, which I had detained and ordered to Norfolk by way of precaution early in March, was one of the three vessels temporarily detached and detailed for the expedition. To supply her place I, on the 30th of March, the day I received the President's decision, ordered the sloop-of-war *Cumberland*, then at Hampton Roads, destined for the West Indies, to proceed to Norfolk. The *Cumberland* was a sailing vessel which could not be made available for the Sumter expedition.

She was the flag-ship of Commodore Pendergrast, who was in command of the Home Squadron, and it was a satisfaction that so experienced an officer could be associated with Commodore McCauley, with a full crew, in case of an emergency. The President and Secretary of State proposed that Commodore Pendergrast should go to Vera Cruz, in consequence of certain complications in that quarter; but the condition of affairs at home made it advisable that he and his flag-ship should be detained in the waters of Virginia. With the exception of the Cumberland, the Sumter expedition took from the Navy Department on the 6th of April every available naval vessel. It was at this culminating period that vessels were most wanted in the Chesapeake and on the Potomac; for, in case of a conflict at Charleston, it was uncertain what would be the attitude of Virginia. I felt hopeful, however, that the Cumberland would be adequate for the protection of the yard from any attack by water. The defence by land was a military measure, in which she could also participate, and render efficient assistance, if necessary.

There were many circumstances attending the Sumter expedition which are interwoven with this subject, that are not generally known; but, as I have said, they belong to the history of those times. Allusion to some of them cannot be wholly omitted in stating the proceedings of the navy and the Navy Department, and the policy and acts of the Administration attending the destruction of the navy-yard at Norfolk. The men on the receiving-ship at Brooklyn, whom Commodore Breese had been directed on the 29th of March to send to Norfolk, were diverted to that expedition, and placed on the Powhatan. This important vessel, by an irregular and most extraordinary proceeding, and against the final and express orders of the President, detached from the expedition she was to lead after she left the Brooklyn Navy-yard, and withdrawn for several weeks, until after Sumter fell and Norfolk was abandoned, from the control of the Navy Department, and sent to the Gulf, where she was not needed, instead of going to Charleston and then returning North, where she was most wanted.

On the 6th of April every available naval steamer at the

disposal of the Department, and all the men excepting those on the Cumberland, sailed for Sumter. What was to be their reception, what would be the determination of the secession organization at Charleston, and what the result of the attempt to relieve the garrison, were matters uncertain, but of deep anxiety. In a few days all doubts were removed. The secessionists, on being apprised of the determination of the Administration, and of the departure of the expedition, commenced immediate hostilities. They opened fire on Sumter on the 12th of April, before the vessels reached Charleston. The fort was evacuated on the 14th. Three days after the evacuation of Sumter, the Virginia Convention joined the Confederates. In that period of uncertainty, while hoping for the best, but in anticipation of the worst, I wrote Commodore McCauley, in command of the Norfolk Navy-yard, on the 19th of April, the squadron being then on its way to Charleston, that, "in view of the peculiar condition of the country and of events that have already transpired, it becomes necessary that great vigilance should be exercised in guarding and protecting the public interests and property committed to your charge. . . . If other precautions are required, you will immediately apprise the Department."

In the same communication he was informed, in view of the President's policy and the attitude of Virginia, "it is desirable that there should be no steps taken to give needless alarm; but it may be best to order most of the shipping to sea or to other stations"; and he was further directed to "keep the Department advised of the condition of affairs; of any cause of apprehension, should any exist."

On the 11th of April I directed Commodore Breese to send two hundred men to Norfolk, if that number had been enlisted. Commander—now Commodore—Alden, the present Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, was ordered on the same day, the 11th, to report to Commodore McCauley, to take charge of the steamer Merrimack, and deliver her over to the commanding officer at Philadelphia. Orders were sent to Commodore McCauley at the same time to have the Merrimack and Plymouth prepared immediately for removal, and that there should be no delay. Mr. Isherwood, Chief of the Bureau of Steam Engineering, was

directed on the following day, the 12th, to proceed to Norfolk and give his personal attention to putting the engines of the Merrimack in working condition.

On the 14th of April Fort Sumter was evacuated, and on the 15th President Lincoln issued his proclamation calling for seventy-five thousand troops. On the succeeding day the following letters were sent, respectively, to Commodore McCauley, commanding the navy-yard, and to Commodore Pendergrast, commanding the above squadron, by the hands of Commodore Paulding:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, April 16, 1861

SIR:

The events which have transpired since my confidential communication to you of the 10th instant impose additional vigilance and care in protecting the public property under your charge, and placing the vessels and stores, if necessary, beyond jeopardy. Referring to my letter of the 10th, you will continue to carry out the instructions therein contained. The Engineer-in-Chief, B. F. Isherwood, who was despatched to Norfolk to aid in putting the Merrimack in condition to be moved, reports that she will be ready to take her departure on Thursday. It may not be necessary, however, that she should leave at that time unless there is immediate danger pending. But no time should be lost in getting her armament on board; and you will also place the more valuable public property, ordnance stores, etc., on shipboard, so that they can at any moment be moved beyond the reach of seizure. With diligence on your part, it is not anticipated that any sudden demonstration can be made which will endanger either the vessels or stores. The Plymouth and Dolphin should be placed beyond danger of immediate assault at once, if possible. The Germantown can receive on board stores and ordnance from the yard, and be towed out by the Merrimack if an assault is threatened. Men have been ordered from New York to man and assist in moving the vessels; but recent demands have left an insufficient number to meet the requisition. Under these circumstances, should it become necessary, Commodore Pendergrast will assist you with men from the Cumberland. You will please submit this letter and my confidential communication of the 10th

to Commodore Pendergrast who will assist and coöperate with you in carrying the views of the Department into effect. As it is difficult to give instructions in detail, the Department has thought proper to despatch Commodore Paulding to Norfolk, who will be the bearer of this communication, and explain to yourself and Commodore Pendergrast the views and purposes of the Department. You will be pleased to advise with him freely and fully as to your duties and the interests of the Government in the present threatening emergency. The vessels and stores under your charge you will defend at any hazard, repelling by force, if necessary, any and all attempts to seize them, whether by mob violence, organized effort, or any assumed authority.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, yours, etc.,

GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.
Commodore C. S. McCAULEY, Norfolk, Virginia.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, April 16, 1861

SIR:

A state of things has arisen which renders the immediate departure of the *Cumberland*, as originally intended, inexpedient. Events of recent occurrence, and the threatening attitude of affairs in some parts of our country, call for the exercise of great vigilance and energy at Norfolk. Confidential communications have been heretofore made to Commodore McCauley on these subjects, which he will submit to you; and Commodore Paulding, who brings this letter to you, will verbally and more in detail explain the views of the Department. Please to advise freely and fully with both these gentlemen, and coöperate with them in defending the vessels and public property at the navy-yard. As it may become necessary to render assistance from the force under your command.

Until further orders the departure of the *Cumberland* to Vera Cruze will be deferred. In the mean time you will lend your assistance and that of your command toward the vessels now in the yard in condition to be moved, placing the ordnance and ordnance stores on board for moving, and in case of invasion, insurrection, or violence of any kind, to

suppress it, repelling assault by force if necessary. The Cumberland can render effective service, and it is deemed fortunate that the Government is enabled to avail itself of your service and that of your command, at this juncture, at Norfolk.

I am sir respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.

Commodore G. J. PENDERGRAST, commanding U. S. sloop
Cumberland, Norfolk Virginia.

Commodore Paulding was at that time attached to the Navy Department as its detailing officer; and lest there should be some misapprehension, neglect, or wrong, I gave him verbal orders to go to Norfolk, personally inspect the condition of the navy-yard, satisfy himself of the fidelity and vigilance of the officers and men, and to consult and advise at his discretion with Commodore McCauley and Pendergrast. Many of the most important orders given at that early day were verbal, unwritten instructions, for great infidelity pervaded the departments. Confidence was impaired, distrust prevailed, and, when treachery was so extended and deep, penetrating every branch of the Government, extreme caution became necessary in regard to every movement.

Commodore McCauley wrote me on the 16th that the Merrimack would probably be ready for temporary service on the evening of the next day. Commodore Paulding returned on the 17th, and made a favorable report of affairs, of the fidelity and Union feeling of the officers in command; said that the engines of the Merrimack were in order, and she would leave on the following day. But Chief Engineer Isherwood returned to Washington the next morning—the 18th—and reported that Commodore McCauley had refused to permit the Merrimack to depart after her engines were in order and men to move her were on board, and had directed the fires that were kindled to be drawn.

Immediately on receiving this report I went with the President to General Scott to procure a competent military officer, and, if possible, a military force, for the shore defences of the

navy-yard. Information had reached us that the Convention at Richmond had yielded to secession. We also heard of the rapid rising of the insurgents, and of their intention to seize at once Harper's Ferry, the navy-yard at Norfolk, and Fortress Monroe, not one of which had a proper military support. There were no fortifications whatever to defend the navy-yard from the insurgents, no military force was there, and the expectation that the Cumberland and the small number of sailors would be able to temporarily hold the yard until military assistance could arrive was shaken by the intelligence that morning received, and the further fact that vessels were being sunk to obstruct the channel. General Scott, on our application for military aid, said we were asking an impossibility. He assured us he had no troops to send for the defence of the navy-yard, and that it was not susceptible of defence if he had them; that any men he might order there would almost certainly be captured; that it was enemy's country, without fortifications or batteries for them to occupy; that seamen and marines who might be on shipboard for water defence could perhaps do something toward protecting the public property, and escape if overwhelmed, provided the obstructions which we heard were being sunk in the channel did not prevent, but there could be no escape for soldiers. The General stated, with a heavy heart, that he had no troops to spare for the defence of Harper's Ferry, and that the arms and stores at that place must inevitably be lost.

The garrison at Fortress Monroe was, he feared, insufficient to repel the force which it was understood was organizing to attack it. He had not, he said, men sufficient to protect Washington if a formidable demonstration was made. At length he promised to send Colonel Delafield of the Engineer Corps, and I think consented, before the Pawnee left, that a battalion of the Massachusetts volunteers, raised under the proclamation of the 15th, might accompany Commodore Paulding, provided they had reached Hampton Roads. They were, he said, undisciplined—would be good for nothing as yet for serious fighting, but would be serviceable in throwing up batteries under the direction of the engineer. For the present, his first great duty, with his feeble force, was to defend Washington, and next

to Washington, Fortress Monroe, which was the key to Washington, Norfolk, Baltimore, Chesapeake Bay, and the rivers which entered it. He therefore could not, and would not, consent to part with a single regular for either Harper's Ferry or the Norfolk Navy-yard; and his opinion frankly expressed to us was that the public property in each of those places must, in case of an attack, be sacrificed. The most that could be done was to prevent the vessels and stores from passing into the hands of the insurgents.

Harper's Ferry was abandoned that evening.

As but little assistance could be derived from the military, I lost not a moment, after parting from the President and General Scott, in giving the following order to Commodore Paulding:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, April 18, 1861.

SIR:

You are directed to proceed forthwith to Norfolk and take command of all the naval forces there afloat.

With the means placed at your command, you will do all in your power to protect and place beyond danger the vessels and property belonging to the United States. On no account should the arms and munitions be permitted to fall into the hands of the insurrectionists, or those who would wrest them from the custody of the Government; and, should it finally become necessary, you will, in order to prevent that result, destroy the property.

In carrying into effect these orders, you are invested with full power to command the services of the entire naval force, and you will, if necessary, repel force by force in carrying out these instructions. It is understood that the War Department will detail Colonel Richard Delafield, or some other competent officer, with a command to aid and assist in protecting and guarding the yard and property at Gosport and vicinity, and you will coöperate with that officer in this object.

I am sir, respectfully, etc.,

GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.
Commodore HIRAM PAULDING, Washington, D. C.

This order was to repel, not to assail; the Administration continued to be forbearing, and to the last was not aggressive. Extreme men were dissatisfied and censorious because the Administration did not attack, though not prepared. On to Sumter was the word, as at a later period the cry, equally inconsiderate, was "On to Richmond."

Commodore Alden, who, as already remarked, had been sent on special duty to Norfolk on the 11th of April, returned on the morning of the 19th, and confirmed the statements of Chief Engineer Isherwood. The Cabinet was in session when he arrived. The loss of Harper's Ferry the preceding evening, and the movements at Norfolk, with the threatened attack upon the navy-yard and upon Fortress Monroe, were among the matters under consideration. When Commander Alden arrived he went to the Navy Department, and finding me absent, followed to the Executive Mansion, and, calling me from the council, related the strange condition of things at Norfolk, and the bewildered and incapacitated state of mind of Commodore McCauley. After hearing his statement I introduced him to the President and Cabinet, to whom he recapitulated the statement which he had made to me. He was immediately attached to the expedition under Commodore Paulding, and returned to Norfolk that evening.

The Pawnee reached Washington from the Sumter expedition just in time to be despatched to Norfolk. She was placed at the disposal of Commodore Paulding, with all the naval officers, men, and means that were at command, and left Washington on the evening of the 19th. Captain Wright, of the army engineers, now Brevet Major-General Wright, was substituted for Colonel Delafield, and accompanied the expedition. The Pawnee reached Fortress Monroe on the afternoon of the 20th. Commodore Paulding procured from Colonel Dimmick, in command, three hundred and fifty Massachusetts volunteers, who had been enlisted, embarked at Boston, and reached Hampton Roads within four days after the proclamation of the President of the 15th.

When Commodore Paulding arrived at Norfolk on the evening of the 20th, he found that the vessels at the yard had

been scuttled and were sinking. Nothing in his opinion, remained but to burn them and destroy such property as could not be carried away by the Cumberland and Pawnee, as General Scott had said would be inevitable, to prevent it from passing into the possession of the insurgents.

Of the manner in which the orders of the Navy Department were executed, or of the expediency and necessity of the measures taken in the first instance by Commodore McCauley, after consulting with and being advised by Commodore Paulding to scuttle the vessels and destroy the guns, and of the completion of the work of destruction thus commenced by Commodore Paulding when he arrived, it is unnecessary to speak at this time. The whole was an exercise of judgment and of authority by three experienced, brave, tried, and faithful officers in a great emergency, for which Congress had not provided and the country was not prepared. Great censure has been bestowed upon them by persons who know little of the circumstances, and who had none of the responsibilities. Whether the conclusions of these officers were right or wrong, they were such as in their judgment were best—and were precisely such as General Scott had said would be inevitable.

These proceedings, it will be borne in mind, were all of them before a blockade had been ordered. The first proclamation of the President, directing a blockade or closing of the Southern ports, was issued on the 19th of April, the day on which Commodore Paulding went a second time to Norfolk, invested with plenary powers. But this proclamation did not include Virginia; that State and North Carolina were exempted from its operation. The Administration was determined to occupy no hostile attitude toward Virginia so long as a single hope remained that her Government and people would continue faithful to the Union. It was not until the 27th of April that her ports were ordered to be put under blockade, just one week after the abandonment of Norfolk.

Fort Sumter

FACTS IN RELATION TO THE EXPEDITION ORDERED BY THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN FOR THE RELIEF OF THE GARRISON IN FORT SUMTER

One of the strangest episodes of the Civil War was Secretary of State Seward's diversion of the *Powhatan* from Fort Sumter to Fort Pickens. Welles's reactions to this interference with his department, his explanations of Seward's motives, and his appreciation of the President's troubles constitute the subject matter of the following article.

NO QUESTION that presented itself during the four eventful years of his administration gave President Lincoln greater annoyance and embarrassment than the difficult one relating to Fort Sumter and its garrison, which met him at the very threshold of his Presidential career. He had said in his inaugural address, and honestly and sincerely intended, that "the power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government, and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere."

On the day succeeding the utterance of these solemn as-

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surances, he was informed that the garrison in Fort Sumter, which had been threatened for months, was short of provisions, and that this, the only fortress or place in South Carolina, the State which for more than thirty years had been discontented and anxious for a disruption of the Union—which had taken the open lead in secession—which was active in fomenting and promoting sectionalism and insurrection in the cotton, and, if possible, in all the slave States—that this last remaining property and post of the Federal Government in South Carolina could not, in the opinion of Major Anderson and his officers, be relieved and reinforced with less than twenty thousand efficient and well-disciplined men. The Government had no such army, and it was utterly impossible to collect and organize one in season, even if there were authority to raise one before resistance was made or any actual hostilities existed. The retiring Administration had taken no step to sustain or enforce its authority; had thrown almost the whole military force of the Government in broken fragments on the distant frontiers; had stationed no strong military force in the States when they beheld this vast conspiracy organizing. A few regiments placed at one or two points early, could not only have asserted and maintained the Federal authority and deterred rebellion, but would have served as a nucleus or rallying point to encourage and inspire confidence in the patriotic Union men, who were at least a moiety of the whole population. If the Administration of Mr. Buchanan did nothing, as is claimed, to encourage the rebellion, it did little to prevent or suppress it. Under the plea or pretext that he did not possess authority to coerce a State, Mr. Buchanan had failed to maintain the national integrity. He had witnessed the rising insurrection, had seen forts, navy-yards, custom-houses, and public property wrested from the possession of the Government and pass into the hands of the insurgents, without any serious attempt to prevent it. That he and those in whom he confided intended to excite, or that they anticipated the terrible civil war which ensued, may not be true; but it is not to be denied that they took no decisive steps against it. The political sympathies of the Buchanan Administration were with the secessionists, as opposed to those

who succeeded them in the administration and to the party which elected Mr. Lincoln. With these feelings and this policy, the Administration of Buchanan had been passive and indifferent; had, through the four months which intervened between the election in November and the inauguration in March, lifted no hand, had certainly performed no efficient act toward suppressing one of the most formidable insurrections that was ever instituted, and which was openly and avowedly maturing. To no small extent had the Democratic party, which opposed the election of Mr. Lincoln, permitted itself to be led astray by the policy of Mr. Buchanan. The secessionists attempted to justify their movements by an abuse of the doctrine of State rights and of a strict construction of the Constitution, which was the basis of the old Democratic organization. As the Federal Constitution contained no clause prohibiting a State from withdrawing from the Union, it was denied that the Federal Government was endowed with power to compel or coerce a State to remain in the Union. For a time, and in the absence of any argument, this absurdity, which was not even specious, had an influence under impassioned party excitement with many Democrats, who, having opposed the election of Mr. Lincoln, permitted themselves to be hurried along by the Buchanan policy and the influence of party organization into dangerous and unjustifiable opposition, which for a time countenanced and aided in giving impulse to the secession movement. It is no doubt true that many of the Democrats began to hesitate and ultimately to dissent from the extremists of their party, as the object, purpose, and ends of the secessionists were developed; but at the commencement of his administration. Mr. Lincoln had these party opponents who disavowed secession to meet, as well as the actual disunionists.

Under the influence and madness of party the secessionists, acting with an ulterior purpose, had contrived to secure possession of the organized political and constitutional governments of each of the Southern States. Those in insurrection had, therefore, the form of legal State authority to sanction their acts. The Administration of Buchanan conceded this form of resistance to the Federal Government as legitimate, and by its

non-coercive policy had made the secession movement powerful and the Federal Government almost powerless.

The new Administration was denounced in advance of any act, and even before the President was inaugurated, as hostile to the South—the enemy of Southern institutions—the opponent of State rights—intent on the abolition of slavery, and desiring to oppress the people by coercive and arbitrary measures. The stability and power of the national Union began to be doubted. Men of all parties saw that no vigorous or efficient measures were taken to suppress the insurrection; that the Administration of Buchanan was weak and feeble, when strength and power were necessary; and this obvious feebleness, with the impression that the Administration was an exponent of the constitutional authority, weakened and impaired confidence in the ability and strength of the Government itself. It was under these circumstances, when strange theories were prevalent, when State rights doctrines and strict construction principles were perverted and abused, when those who administered the Federal Government declared it was destitute of power to maintain its supremacy or enforce the laws, that Mr. Lincoln, constitutionally elected, but by a majority vote, entered upon his duties as Chief Magistrate. A factious and partisan, not a patriotic and national spirit, had actuated the Congress which had just adjourned without adopting measures to strengthen the hands of the Government. The new Administration that was, at the commencement of its career, to meet the rebellion which had been long maturing, was left by the Thirty-sixth Congress without resources, preparatory measures, or additional authority for the crisis. The new President was an untried public man, comparatively unknown to his countrymen, and liable to be misrepresented. Not only the secessionists in the South, but his political party opponents in the North, availed themselves of these circumstances to create distrust in his abilities and intentions. Many even of those who aided in electing him were anxiously waiting and watching, not without some misgiving, yet in hopeful confidence that he would fulfil their expectations; but they were unable to dissipate doubts and refute the calumnies against him by any official acts. Neither time nor

opportunity was given him to demonstrate his capacity and fitness, or to make known his intentions, for his oath was not registered when he was compelled to act.

The attention of the whole country had for some time been directed toward Fort Sumter, in the harbor of Charleston. The feeble attempt by the *Star of the West*—a chartered steamer—to relieve the garrison, made by the Buchanan Administration in the winter, had been repelled, and this result was submitted to by the Government without effort, and with an understanding that reinforcements should not be sent to strengthen Major Anderson's command. The State of South Carolina, elated by this repulse and submission, demanded that the important fortress in her principal harbor should be surrendered to the State. The fortress belonged to the United States, had been built at the expense of the Federal Treasury, and could not be peaceably surrendered by the Federal Government even to a foreign power, much less to persons or State authorities in insurrection.

In order to excite enmity against the new President, it was charged that he designed to make war upon the South, and there was a purpose to compel him, in the maintenance of his authority, to strike the first hostile blow which was to be the justification of the rebels for resistance. None expected the Administration to imitate the passive policy which Mr. Buchanan had pursued.

Mr. Lincoln adopted a forbearing and conciliatory course, and indulged a hope, longer than most of his friends, that a reconciliation could be effected. He persisted in his resolution to exhaust all peaceable means, and under no circumstances to be aggressive. But the question in relation to Sumter and the condition of the garrison was embarrassing. If he sent troops and attempted to reinforce Major Anderson, it would be claimed on one hand to be a fulfilment of the assertion that he intended to subjugate the South. On the other hand, many of his impulsive but inconsiderate supporters demanded that he should adopt instant measures to reinforce the garrison—the very step which his opponents wished him to take.

On the morning of the 6th of March, 1861, two days after the inauguration, the Hon. Joseph Holt, who continued to dis-

charge the duties of Secretary of War, called on me at the Navy Department, with the compliments of Lieutenant-General Scott, and requested my attendance at the War Department on matters of special importance. I went with him immediately to the office of the Secretary of War, where were several persons, convened, as I soon learned, by order of the President. Among them were Generals Scott and Totten and two or three members of the Cabinet.

General Scott commenced by stating that important despatches had been received from Major Anderson in relation to the condition of the garrison at Fort Sumter, which the President had directed him to submit to the Secretaries of War and Navy. He proceeded to comment on the perilous situation of the country, and the difficulties and embarrassments he had experienced for months; related the measures and precautions he had taken for the public safety, the advice and warnings he had given to President Buchanan, which, unfortunately, had made less impression than the emergency demanded. Other counsels than his had prevailed. Instead of meeting the crisis at the commencement, or preparing for the storm which threatened us, a passive course had been adopted, and the public mind was now greatly inflamed. He had, he said, with the knowledge of Secretary Holt, taken the responsibility of organizing and ordering a small military force to be present at the inauguration, for the protection of the Government, and for the security of the archives and public property. This force was, however, insufficient for the public safety should a conflict take place, and he would not conceal from us his apprehensions that one was imminent, and perhaps inevitable.

The despatches from Major Anderson, which were received on the 4th of March, contained intelligence of a distressing character. They informed the Government that his supplies were almost exhausted, and that unless provisions could be received within six weeks the garrison would be destitute and must evacuate the fort.

To most of us the information was unexpected and astounding, and there was on the part of such of us as had received no previous intimation of the condition of things at Sumter an

earnest determination that immediate and efficient steps should be taken to relieve and reinforce the garrison. General Scott, without assenting or dissenting, related the difficulties which had already taken place, and stated the formidable obstacles to be encountered from the numerous and well-manned batteries, some of which the Government had permitted to pass into the possession of the secessionists, and others had been erected, the Government not preventing, in Charleston harbor. He did not, I think, in this first interview, communicate certain memoranda of Major Anderson and his officers on the practicability, or rather impracticability, of reinforcing the garrison. These were submitted, with his own prepared opinion, a few days later. He said, however, there was not in his entire command a sufficient military force to relieve Major Anderson, nor could one be collected and organized within the time limited to accomplish that object. If any relief could be extended, it must be by the navy. An attempt had been made by water, which failed. Commander Ward, a gallant officer, had, he said, tendered his services to join Major Anderson on a former occasion when the subject was considered, and was ready at any time to take command of an expedition if one were now ordered. These, however, were matters for the naval authorities to decide, but it was not expected any definite conclusion would be arrived at on this occasion. The subject was of paramount importance, deserving of deliberate consideration; at the same time the exigencies of the case required prompt decision. It was, he said, a satisfaction to him to relieve his mind of overburdened care and responsibilities with which it had been loaded for months. He especially requested me to consult with some of the distinguished naval officers who were at the seat of government in regard to the practicability of reinforcing the garrison by water.

A court-martial was in session at that time in Washington, convened for the trial of Captain Armstrong, who had surrendered the Pensacola Navy-yard to the insurgents. On this court were some of the most intelligent and experienced officers in the service, and I availed myself of the opportunity to obtain their views and opinions on this interesting and absorbing ques-

tion. Among others whom I consulted were Rear-Admirals Stewart, Gregory, Stringham, and Paulding. Each of them thought the relief of the fort practicable, though it would doubtless be attended with some sacrifice and loss of life should there be resistance. All of them, I think, expressed their readiness to undertake the work, except Rear-Admiral Stewart, whose age and infirmities precluded him but no one was more earnest and decisive in his opinion that it could and should be done than that veteran officer. He lamented that he was not forty years younger, to render this service, and related an incident which he had witnessed in Barcelona, where an English naval force passed under the fire of Spanish forts and performed a successful achievement. Few of the younger officers were taken into confidence and consulted, for the subject was one on which publicity was not desirable, and in the general demoralization which prevailed it was sometimes difficult to determine who were and who were not reliable. Commanders Ward and Jenkins were made aware of the proceedings, and both concurred with their seniors. The former, who had been summoned to Washington, was put in immediate communication with General Scott, who had consulted him under the late Administration, and had great influence over him. Commodore Stringham, whom I had selected as an assistant in matters of detail in the Navy Department, had two or three conferences with General Scott and Commander Ward in my presence, and it was not difficult to perceive that the General had no confidence whatever in any successful effort to reinforce Sumter either by land or water. In successive Cabinet meetings the subject was fully discussed—generals Scott and Totten and Commodore Stringham being sometimes present. At one of these conferences General Totten read by direction of General Scott an elaborate argument or report which had been prepared by these two officers in obedience to orders from the President. In this carefully-prepared paper they stated the impracticability of relieving the garrison should the insurgents resist by force, and that ultimately Sumter must inevitably fall. Some discussion took place between them and Commodore Stringham as to the capability of naval vessels to encounter or pass batteries which the military

gentlemen consider impossible, but Commodore Stringham, while he did not decisively contradict, did not fully assent to their views. Memoranda were submitted from Major Anderson, in which all of the officers under his command united, expressing his professional opinion that Fort Sumter could not be relieved and reinforced with less than twenty thousand good and well-disciplined men. These views were fully endorsed by the military gentlemen who were consulted, and had great influence on the President and Cabinet.

Mr. Seward from the commencement doubted not only the practicability of reinforcing Sumter, but the expediency of any attempt to provision the garrison, therein differing from every one of his colleagues, though in perfect accord with General Scott. The subject in all its aspects was less novel to him than the rest of us, and from some cause his conclusions were wholly unlike the others. If not indifferent, he had none of the zeal which inspired his colleagues, but seemed to consider it an unimportant or settled question. The insurgents had possession of Fort Moultrie, Castle Pinckney, and in fact all the defences of Charleston: what benefit, he asked, could we derive from retaining this isolated fortress if it were possible to do so?

Mr. Blair, on the other hand, who was scarcely less familiar with the whole subject than Mr. Seward, was emphatic and decisive from first to last in his opinion that Sumter should be reinforced at any cost or any sacrifice. He insisted that the time had arrived when the Government should assert its power and authority, and not pursue the feeble and pusillanimous policy of the late Administration, which, by yielding everything, had encouraged secession until it had become formidable. There was direct antagonism between these two gentlemen—one believing that hostilities could not be avoided, that tampering and temporizing had been a great and fatal mistake on the part of the Government—the other still hopeful that by a conciliatory course and skilful management, a peaceful adjustment of difficulties could be effected.

The President was greatly disturbed by the intelligence from Major Anderson, and the conclusion of the military officers, that the garrison could not be reinforced before their supplies

would be exhausted. He did not relinquish the hope that if time were given the Administration just entering upon its duties, there might be a satisfactory adjustment of impending difficulties. In this he was strengthened and encouraged by the views and representation of the Secretary of State, who had during the winter been in communication with members of the Buchanan Administration and leading secessionists. In order that the door to conciliation should remain open, the President felt it important that the Government should be forbearing, not aggressive; and he considered it essential that the Administration should not strike the first blow. Yet the fact was before us that Sumter must be abandoned if not soon succored, and the military experts, whose advice he sought, and by which he felt it was his duty to be governed, pronounced it impracticable.

The members of the Cabinet, with the exception of Messrs. Seward and Blair, coincided in the views of the President, and like him were embarrassed by the question presented. They were united in the opinion that the Federal authority must be asserted and maintained, but under the circumstances deprecated hasty coercive measures, and, unless it became absolutely necessary, were unwilling in view of the military counsels to resort to force to provision the fort.

Commodore Stringham and Commander Ward, after investigating the subject, ascertaining the number of batteries to be encountered and obstacles to be overcome, and listening to the arguments of General Scott, united with him in the expression of their opinion that it would be unadvisable to attempt to relieve Sumter. Commander Ward therefore returned on the 12th of March to his duties in Brooklyn.

Mr. Seward's views and policy had undoubtedly an influence on the military and naval gentlemen and on members of the Cabinet in forming their conclusions. General Scott deferred to him greatly, and had acted in concert with him for months. Commander Ward was a favorite with General Scott, and was probably governed by him in his final decision in this instance.

If Mr. Seward supposed the question was disposed of when the naval and military gentlemen so advised and all the Cabinet

but one deferred to it, and when Commander Ward abandoned it, he soon learned his mistake; for Mr. Blair on the very day that Commander Ward returned to Brooklyn telegraphed to Mr. G. V. Fox, who had interested himself in this question during the winter, requesting that gentlemen to come to Washington. This summons Mr. Fox promptly obeyed, and arrived in Washington on the evening of the following day, the 13th of March. He was immediately introduced by Mr. Blair to the President, to whom he made known his plan and his readiness to carry it into effect.

Mr. Fox was a brother-in-law of Mr. Blair, they having married daughters of Mr. Levi Woodbury, formerly Secretary of the Navy, afterwards Secretary of the Treasury, and at the time of his death one of the Judges of the Supreme Court. Although then engaged in manufacturing in Massachusetts, Mr. Fox had in early life been an officer of the navy. The preceding winter he had volunteered his services to the Buchanan Administration to carry supplies to Sumter, but his services were then declined. General Scott, who had favored Mr. Fox's proposition in February, declared it was now an impossibility; but Mr. Fox was unwilling to relinquish it without first visiting Sumter. To this the President assented, and he left Washington for Charleston on the 19th of March. In an interview which he had with Major Anderson within the fort, that officer declared it was impossible for the navy to obtain ingress to him, and that relief could be furnished by no other means than by landing an effective army on Morris Island. His views coincided in all respects with those of General Scott, and confirmed the position of Mr. Seward. But Mr. Fox dissented and adhered to his plan, which was in accordance with the policy of Mr. Blair. In several consultations with the President, the Cabinet, General Scott, and Commodore Stringham, he developed his plan by which the fort could in his belief be provisioned and reinforced with boats by night. He proposed that Commodore Stringham should command the naval expedition; but when I suggested this to the Commodore, he decided it was too late to be successful, and assured Mr. Fox it would jeopard the reputation of any officer who should undertake it.

Time was valuable to the Administration, which had not yet gained confidence, which its own Congressional supporters distrusted, and in a great crisis had neglected to clothe with any extraordinary or discretionary powers. Without means, without unity and confidence among those of the different parties who opposed secession, the President was slow and deliberate. Some of his partisan friends began to denounce his delay as weakness and imbecility.

The supplies in the fort were getting low when Mr. Lamon, the former business partner of the President, who had been sent as a special and trusty messenger to Major Anderson, after the visit and report of Mr. Fox, returned on the 28th of March and stated it would be impossible to reinforce the garrison, and that the provisions on hand would be exhausted by the 15th of April, but a little over two weeks from that date. On receiving this information from Lamon, the President declared he would send supplies to the garrison, and if the secessionists forcibly resisted, on them would be the responsibility of initiating hostilities. This conclusion, though it conflicted in some degree with the views of the military gentlemen, he felt to be a political necessity. He could not, consistently with his convictions of his duty, and with the policy which he had enunciated in his inaugural, order the evacuation of Sumter; and it would be inhuman on his part to permit the heroic garrison to be starved into a surrender without an attempt to relieve it.

The Secretary of State was the only member of the Cabinet who did not cordially concur in these conclusions, and he could not successfully controvert them. He did not, however, give his earnest approval, but in acquiescing reiterated what he had previously urged—that the attempt if made would prove a failure; that the failure would strengthen the secessionists and weaken the Government; that in the attitude of parties it would be viewed as the commencement of hostilities; would foreclose all measures of conciliation, and place the Administration in a wrong and false position. But the President was decided in the opinion that whatever might be the military aspect of the question, the political necessities and his duty required that there should be an attempt at least to reinforce the garrison.

On the next day, therefore, I received the following communication:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, March 29, 1861.

Honorable Secretary of the Navy.

SIR:

I desire that an expedition to move by sea be got ready to sail as early as the 6th of April next, the whole according to memorandum enclosed; and that you coöperate with the Secretary of War for that object.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

(Memoranda.)

NAVY DEPARTMENT.—The Pocahontas at Norfolk, the Pawnee at Washington, and revenue cutter Harriet Lane at New York, to be ready for sea with one month's stores.

Three hundred seamen to be ready for leaving the receiving ship at New York.

WAR DEPARTMENT.—Two hundred men at New York ready to leave garrison.

One year's stores to be put in portable form.

This communication and memoranda from the President were my authority for proceeding to fit out an expedition in conjunction with the War Department to reinforce Fort Sumter. As the object was to relieve a military garrison, the expedition was made a military one, and was under the control and direction of the War Department. The Secretary of War specially commissioned Mr. Fox—then a private citizen of Massachusetts, but some weeks after the termination of the Sumter expedition made Assistant Secretary of the Navy—and gave him his written instructions.

The steamer Powhatan, Captain Mercer, which arrived in New York while these matters were pending, and had been ordered out of commission, was added to the vessels enumerated in the memoranda, as her boats and crew were deemed indispensable for landing the supplies. This vessel had just returned from a cruise and greatly needed repairs, but she could, it was

believed, be made available for this service to Charleston. I therefore sent the following telegram on the 1st of April to the commandant of the Brooklyn Navy-yard revoking the order by which her officers were detached and she was put out of commission:

WASHINGTON, D. C., April 1, 1861
—Received at Brooklyn 4:10 P.M.

To Commodore S. L. BREESE, Navy-yard.

The Department revokes its orders for the detachment of the officers of the Powhatan and the transfer and discharge of her crew. Hold her in readiness for sea service.

GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.

After consultation with the President, who was earnest and deeply interested in the expedition, I sent the following additional and peremptory telegram:

WASHINGTON D. C., April 1, 1861
—Received at Brooklyn 6:50 P.M.

To Commandant of Navy-yard.

Fit out Powhatan to go to sea at the earliest possible moment.

GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.

Great credit is due the late Rear-Admiral Foote, who was at that time the executive officer of the Brooklyn Navy-yard, for the energy and activity with which he carried these orders into effect, and caused the Powhatan, which had been partially dismantled, to be fitted for sea within the time limited.

There were daily interviews between the President and myself on this subject, and also with the Secretary of War and the Secretary of State. There were also frequent consultations at which other members of the Cabinet were present. Mr. Seward was not entirely reconciled to the enterprise, and suggested, when the President's determination was fixed, that it would promote harmony to inform the South Carolina authorities of the intention to send supplies peaceably to the garrison, and

that if not resisted it would not be reinforced. This had been the Buchanan policy, but was not consistent with a rightful exercise of Federal authority, nor with the idea of a quiet, legitimate movement, the object of which was not to be announced, and to which there should be given no more publicity than was absolutely necessary. The right and the duty of the Government to furnish supplies to its soldiers in its own fort, or to reinforce the command, was undoubted. To inform the secessionists of the intended expedition would be impolitic, for it would give them time to make preparations to defeat it. But Mr. Seward was very persistent, declaring at the same time it would be much more advisable to reinforce Pickens than Sumter. It was, he claimed, practicable to save Pickens, but should there be a conflict it was confessedly impossible to retain Sumter. One would be a waste of effort and energy—would be considered a hostile demonstration, initiating war—while the other would be a peaceable and effective movement.

It was admitted that, in the event of a war, there would be a necessity to strengthen both positions; but there was no immediate call for additional forces at Pickens, for a large part of the home squadron was already off Pensacola. The Brooklyn, the Sabine, the St. Louis, and the Wyandotte were on that station on the 4th of March, and the Crusader and the Mohawk had subsequently been sent to the Gulf by special request of Lieutenant-General Scott. There was in addition to these naval vessels a military force under Captain Vogdes, which had been detained for some time on board the Brooklyn. Instructions had, however, gone forward two weeks previously directing the troops to be landed in order to reinforce Lieutenant Slemmer, who, when Armstrong and Renshaw gave up the navy-yard, had refused to surrender, but like Anderson evacuated the fort (McRea) in which he was stationed, and took possession of the more important fortress of Pickens on Santa Rosa Island, which he had strengthened. Reinforced by Vogdes's command, and aided and supplied by the squadron, Pickens was in no immediate danger, while the condition of Sumter was imminent. The expedition destined to relieve the latter required every naval steamer in commission in the Atlantic ports, and might

then be insufficient. It would leave Norfolk almost defenceless should Virginia join the secessionists. Aid to Pickens was not therefore further discussed, though the subject was not wholly relinquished.

On the 30th of March, the day succeeding my instructions from the President, orders were issued to the commandants of the Brooklyn, Washington, and Norfolk yards to prepare the vessels named for service. Seamen on the receiving ship whom the Navy Department had destined for Norfolk were diverted to the Sumter expedition, and energy and activity stimulated all who in any way were conversant with the subject.

Whatever arrangements had been made by the retiring Administration to abstain from the exercise of Federal authority in the seceding States, or whatever understanding may have existed between the Buchanan Cabinet and the insurgent leaders, with the knowledge and assent of any one or more persons who became members of the Lincoln Administration, are matters which it is unnecessary to discuss at this time. It has been stated by Senator Wilson of Massachusetts that Mr. Stanton, while a member of Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet in the winter of 1861, "put himself in communication with the Republicans in Congress and kept them well informed of what was going on in the councils of the Administration directly relating to the dangers of the country." And Mr. Thurlow Weed has avowed and commended "the coalition then formed by Messrs. Seward and Stanton." I have no doubt, although I was not aware of the fact at the time, that Mr. Stanton communicated "what was going on in the councils of the Administration" in the winter of 1861, notwithstanding his colleague, Mr. Black, questions the truth of Senator Wilson's statement. As to the motives which influenced Mr. Stanton and his conferees, whether secessionists or Unionists, and of the wisdom and ultimate effect of the course pursued and policy adopted by the managing men of all parties who coalesced or had an understanding to suspend active operations during the last three months of the Buchanan Administration, there may be differing opinions. The men who instituted the passive or non-coercive policy of the Federal Government after South Carolina passed her ordinance of seces-

sion, may have been actuated by good motives, and yet have committed a fatal error. They undoubtedly delayed active hostilities, when prompt, energetic, and well-directed action by the National Government might have prevented or crushed in the bud the civil war which for four years drenched the land with fraternal blood. While the Federal Government had been inactive—preserving the status—doing nothing, under the agreement or undersatnding that was made, the secessionists were active in fomenting hostile feelings against the Union, organizing rebellion, seizing forts, erecting batteries, purchasing arms, and preparing for the conflict. It is not necessary here to inquire who of the managing leaders of the three parties of the coalition were victims to the game that was played—whether the Administration, the secessionists, or the few friends of Mr. Lincoln who were in communication with them, were deceived: there was an understanding that the Government should be passive during the winter of 1861, and it was so; but no injunction or restraint was imposed on the insurgents, who were active. Inaction on the part of the Federal Government and activity on the part of the secessionists was the prevailing policy down to the exodus of Mr. Buchanan and the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln on the 4th of March. Congress had been in session until that period, and, amid factious tumult, had witnessed the formidable preparations which were making by the seceding States for a disruption, without adopting any efficient means to prevent it, or even to strengthen the hands of the new Executive. On the 5th of March Messrs. John Forsyth, Martin J. Crawford, and A. B. Roman, purporting to be commissioners “duly accredited by the Government of the Confederate States of America as commissioners to the Government of the United States,” appeared in Washington, and on the 11th asked, through a distinguished Senator, an unofficial interview with the Secretary of State. This request was “respectfully declined”; and on the same day they addressed him a written communication, which was received at the State Department on the 13th, stating that “seven States of the late Federal Union having, in the exercise of the inherent right of every free people to change or reform their political institutions, and through conventions of their

people, withdrawn from the United States and reassumed the attributes of sovereign power delegated to it, have formed a government of their own." They proceeded to say that a speedy adjustment of all questions, etc., and asked an early day to present their credentials to the President of the United States. An answer dated the 15th of March was, it is stated in a postscript, by consent of parties, not delivered until the 8th of April. Personal understanding commenced under Buchanan appears to have been continued into the administration of Lincoln. The memoranda when delivered declined to comply with the request of "the commissioners," and informed them the Secretary of State "has no authority nor is he at liberty to recognize them as diplomatic agents or hold correspondence or other communication with them." In the interim, however, between the 13th of March and the 8th of April, communication, it has been admitted, was had by the Secretary of State with the commissioners through the Hon. John A. Campbell, then an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, in the presence of Judge Nelson of New York, also one of the Judges of the Supreme Court. The memoranda of Mr. Seward, delivered on the 8th of April, called out an answer on the following day—the 9th of April—from the commissioners, who state: "In the postscript to your (the Secretary of State's) memorandum you say it was delayed, as was understood, with their (Messrs. Forsyth and Crawford's) assent. This is true; but it is also true that on the 15th of March Messrs. Forsyth and Crawford were assured by a person occupying a high official position in the Government, and who, as they believed, was speaking by authority, that Fort Sumter would be evacuated within a very few days. . . . On the first of April we were again informed that there might be an attempt to supply Fort Sumter with provisions, but that Governor Pickens should have previous notice of the attempt. There was no suggestion of reinforcements."

The following is part of a published letter of Judge Campbell to the Secretary of State, dated April 13, 1861, relative to these negotiations or communications between the Secretary of State and the insurgents:

WASHINGTON CITY, April 13, 1861.

SIR:

On the 15th of March ultimo, I left with Judge Crawford, one of the commissioners of the Confederate States, a note in writing to the effect following:

"I feel entire confidence that Fort Sumter will be evacuated in the next five days. And this measure is felt as imposing great responsibility on the Administration.

"I feel entire confidence that no measure changing the existing status prejudicially to the Southern Confederate States is at present contemplated.

"I feel an entire confidence that an immediate demand for an answer to the communication of the commissioners will be productive of evil and not of good. I do not believe that it ought at this time be pressed."

The substance of this statement I communicated to you the same evening by letter. Five days elapsed, and I called with a telegram from General Beauregard to the effect that Sumter was not evacuated, but that Major Anderson was at work making repairs.

The next day, after conversing with you, I communicated to Judge Crawford in writing that the failure to evacuate Sumter was not the result of bad faith, but was attributable to causes consistent with the intention to fulfil the engagement, and that as regarded Pickens I should have notice of any design to alter the existing status there. Mr. Justice Nelson was present at these conversations, three in number, and I submitted to him each of my written communications to Judge Crawford, and informed Judge C. that they had his (Judge Nelson's) sanction. I gave you on the 22d of March a substantial copy of the statement I had made on the 15th.

The 30th of March arrived, and at that time a telegram came from Governor Pickens inquiring concerning Colonel Lamon, whose visit to Charleston he supposed had a connection with the proposed evacuation of Fort Sumter. I left that with you, and was to have an answer the following Monday (1st of April). On the 1st of April I received from you the statement in writing: "I am satisfied the Government will not undertake to supply Fort Sumter without giving notice to Governor Pickens." The words "I am

satisfied" were for me to use as expressive of confidence in the remainder of the declaration.

The proposition as originally prepared was, "The President *may desire* to supply Sumter, but will not do so, etc.; and your verbal explanation was that you did not believe any such attempt would be made, and that there was no design to reinforce Sumter.

There was a departure here from the pledges of the previous month, but with the verbal explanation I did not consider it a matter then to complain of. I simply stated to you that I had that assurance previously.

On the 7th of April, I addressed you a letter on the subject of the alarm that the preparations by the Government had created, and asked you if the assurances I had given were well or ill-founded. In respect to Sumter your reply was, "Faith as to Sumter fully kept—wait and see." In the morning's paper I read, "An authorized messenger from President Lincoln informed Governor Pickens and General Beauregard that provisions will be sent to Fort Sumter peaceably or *otherwise by force*." This was the 8th of April at Charleston, the day following your last assurance, and is the evidence of the full faith I was invited to wait for and *see*.

Very respectfully,

JOHN A. CAMPBELL,

Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, U. S.

HON. WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

If any such pledge as indicated in this correspondence was given, or any understanding was had I was not aware of it, nor do I think it was known at the time to other members of the Administration. My orders were given, and my acts also were in perfect sincerity and good faith, and with the hope that Major Anderson and the garrison in Sumter would be relieved. A knowledge of the facts set forth in the foregoing correspondence, is essential to a correct understanding of the proceedings and circumstances attending the expedition to Sumter.

Late in the afternoon of the 1st of April, while at my dinner at Willard's, where I then boarded, Mr. Nicolay, the private

secretary of the President, brought me a large package from the President. I immediately broke the envelope, and found it contained several papers of importance, some of which were of a singular character, being in the nature of instructions or orders from the Executive relative to naval matters of which I knew the President was not informed, and about which I had not been consulted. One of these papers relating to the government of the Navy Department was more singular and extraordinary than either of the others, and was as follows:

(Confidential.)

EXECUTIVE MANSION, April 1, 1861.

To the Secretary of the Navy.

DEAR SIR:

You will issue instructions to Captain Pendergrast, commanding the home squadron, to remain in observation at Vera Cruz—important complications in our foreign relations rendering the presence of an officer of rank there of great importance.

Captain Stringham will be directed to proceed to Pensacola with all possible despatch, and assume command of that portion of the home squadron stationed off Pensacola. He will have confidential instructions to coöperate in every way with the commanders of the land forces of the United States in that neighborhood.

The instructions to the army officers, which are strictly confidential, will be communicated to Captain Stringham after he arrives at Pensacola.

Captain Samuel Barron will relieve Captain Stringham in charge of the Bureau of Detail.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

P. S. As it is very necessary at this time to have a perfect knowledge of the personal (sic!)* of the navy, and to be able to detail such officers for special purposes as the exigencies of the service may require, I request that you will instruct Captain Barron to proceed and organize the Bureau of Detail in the manner best adapted to meet the wants of the navy, taking cognizance of the discipline of the navy gen-

* The misspelling of personnel was not Lincoln's. See below.

erally, detailing all officers for duty, taking charge of the recruiting of seamen, supervising charges made against officers, and all matters relating to duties which must be best understood by a sea officer. You will please afford Captain Barron any facility for accomplishing this duty, transferring to his department the clerical force heretofore used for the purposes specified. It is to be understood that this officer will act by authority of the Secretary of the Navy, who will exercise such supervision as he may deem necessary.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

On reading this extraordinary letter and more extraordinary postscript, I went without a moment's delay to the President with the package in my hand. He was alone in his office writing, and raising his head as I entered he inquired, "What have I done wrong?" I replied that I had received with surprise the package containing, among other things, his instructions respecting the navy and the Navy Department, and I called for an explanation. I then read the foregoing document, the body of which was in the handwriting of Captain Montgomery C. Meigs of the army, the postscript in that of Lieutenant D. D. Porter of the navy. The President expressed as much surprise as I felt that he had signed and sent me such a document.

He said Mr. Seward with two or three young men had been there through the day, on a matter which Mr. Seward had much at heart; that he had yielded to the project of Mr. Seward, but as it involved considerable detail and he had his hands full, and more too, he had left Mr. Seward to prepare the necessary papers. These papers he had signed, some of them without reading, trusting entirely to Mr. Seward, for he could not undertake to read all papers presented to him; and if he could not trust the Secretary of State, whom could he rely upon in a public matter that concerned us all? He seemed disinclined to disclose or dwell on the project, but assured me he never would have signed that paper had he been aware of its contents, much of which had no connection with Mr. Seward's scheme. I asked who were associated with the Secretary of State. "No one," said the President, "but he had these young men here as clerks to

write down his plans and orders." Most of the work, he said, was done in the other room. When I inquired if he knew the young men, he replied, "One was Captain Meigs; another was a companion with whom he seemed intimate, a naval officer named Porter."

Without further inquiry I informed the President that I had no confidence in the fidelity of Captain Barron, who was by this singular order, issued in his name, to be forced into official and personal intimacy with me, and virtually to take charge of the Navy Department. He said he knew nothing of Barron, though he had a genreal recollection that there was such an officer in the navy, and believed he had seen him in Washington. I called his attention to the order, if I was so to consider it, to organize a Bureau of Detail in the Navy Department, and to transfer to a naval officer a portion of the clerical force and civil administrative duties which by law belonged to the Secretary of the Navy—duties which the Secretary had no right to evade and no legal authority to depute to another. The bureaus of the Department, he was doubtless aware, were established by law and not by an executive order. That this proposition to make a naval officer Secretary *de facto*, to transfer him from his professional to civil duties without responsibility, was illegal, and in my view monstrous. It conflicted with the whole theory of our Government and the principles on which the Navy Department was organized and established. The Senate was entitled to a voice in the appointment of chiefs of bureaus. The selection of a trusted officer by the Secretary for advisory and confidential purposes was a different matter. I might, as I had, call an experienced officer to my assistance, with whom I could consult and advise in regard to the personnel of the navy, which was greatly demoralized, and to assist me in detailing officers of fidelity and patriotism; but Barron was one of the last men I could trust in this emergency with these matters of detail and departmental business. Neither the President nor Secretary had power to create a new bureau or to bring a professional naval officer into the Department, and devolve on him the functions which the law imposed on the Secretary. Such detailing and consulting officer as Commodore Stringham, whom I had called

to my side in this great emergency, ought to have the implicit confidence of the Secretary, should be subordinate to him and be selected by him. To all of which the President assented most fully. I then went on to say that Captain Barron was an accomplished officer and gentleman with whom I had personally pleasant relations, but that his feelings, sympathies, and associations were notoriously with the secessionists; that he was prominent in a clique of naval exclusives, most of whom were tainted with secession; that I was not prepared to say he would desert in the crisis which seemed approaching, but I had my apprehensions that such would be the case; that while I should treat him courteously and with friendly consideration, and hoped most sincerely he would not prove false, I could not consent he should have the position nor give him the trust which his instructions imposed.

The President reiterated they were not his instructions, and wished me distinctly to understand they were not, though his name was appended to them—said the paper was an improper one—that he wished me to give it no more consideration than I thought proper—treat it as cancelled, as if it had never been written. He remembered, he said, that both Mr. Seward and Porter had something to say about Barron as superior to almost any officer in the naval service, but whatever his qualifications, he would never knowingly have assigned him or any other man to the position named in the Navy Department without first consulting me. There was at that time a clique of prominent naval officers, as there has been on more than one occasion, anxious to take possession of and control the Navy Department. Many of them were in Washington, and most of them were inclined to secession, of whom Barron was perhaps chief. Assuming to be the *élite* of the navy, they were intimate with and favorites of the secession leaders, and belonged to and moved in their social and political circle. Some of them had resigned before the change of administration; some, it was understood, would throw up their commissions whenever the organized authorities of their States came in conflict with the Federal Government; there were others of this court clique who hesitated to abandon the service, but sought orders which would place them

remote from the threatened conflict. Barron, conspicuous as a courtier, was the agent who had negotiated and perfected the agreement between Messrs. Holt and Taucey, of Buchanan's Cabinet, and Messrs. Mallory and Colonel Chase on the part of the secessionists, by which the Government was not to reinforce Fort Pickens unless it should be attacked. He was a cunning and skilful manager, possessed of considerable diplomatic talents, and was deep in all the secession intrigues in Washington at that period. A few weeks after this attempt to thrust him into the Department, the greater portion of this clique of exclusives sent in their resignations, deserted the flag, and were dismissed the service. Barron, foremost among them, was placed by the rebels in Richmond in command of Fort Hatteras, and on the 29th of August following was captured by Commodore Stringham, the officer whom, by the strange proceedings and surreptitious orders of the 1st of April, he was to have superseded. If I mistake not, this officer, who, by the order which President Lincoln unwittingly signed, was to have had almost absolute control of the Navy Department, and to have been made acquainted with all its operations, was the first of the naval officers that deserted who was made prisoner. It is sufficient here to state that the extraordinary document of the 1st of April was treated as a nullity. Barron, who took rank as captain in the Confederate naval service from the 26th of March, five days before this executive order to create a new bureau and establish him as regent of the Navy Department was "extracted" from the President, was not assigned to duty in the Department, as the instructions directed. Pendergrast did not go to Vera Cruz nor Stringham to Pensacola.

When I inquired the object of detaching Commodore Stringham from duty in the Department where I had placed him, the President said he had no reason to give, and in regard to issuing instructions to Commodore Pendergrast he was equally ignorant. He knew no cause for either. There was, however, a manifest purpose in some quarter to get rid of the presence of these experienced and trusted officers, and also to get Barron into a responsible position. I stated to him that the expedition to Sumter, which we were actively fitting out, would leave us not

a vessel in commission east of Cape Hatteras, except the Cumberland, the flag-ship of Commodore Pendegrast, which vessel I had ordered to Norfolk on the 29th of March, the day that I had received his instructions to send the Pocahontas, then at that navy-yard, on this expedition. I protested against sending the Cumberland away at this juncture. She could, I assured him, render better service to the country in the waters of Virginia in this period of uncertainty and danger than at Vera Cruz, and it seemed to me proper she should be detained at Norfolk, where Commodore Pendergrast could advise with Commodore McCauley, who was in command of the station, and be prepared with a full and efficient crew to render him assistance if necessary. The President concurred with me unqualifiedly, deprecated the interference which had been made in naval affairs, and said the idea of sending the Cumberland away was not his. In directing me, without previous consultation or notice, to detach and send off Commodore Stringham, I confessed to the President I felt annoyed. The Commodore I knew to be true and reliable, and had called him to confidential duties on that account, but he had expressed to me his preference for service afloat, especially if there should be active duty. I was giving the subject consideration, and could not object to it, unless he had been instrumental in procuring this executive order by indirect management, which was wholly unlike him. The President was confident, and I became satisfied on inquiry that Commodore Stringham had no part in the matter; but there had been an improper movement, I will not say intrigue, in some quarter to set him, who had my confidence, aside for Barron, who had not. It is not necessary to probe these strange proceedings further. I state the facts. The President wholly disavowed and disapproved them; they were not consummated, and never from that day to the close of his life was there any similar interference with the administration of the Navy Department, nor was any step concerning it taken without first consulting me.

For a day or two after these proceedings of the 1st of April there was a delay in issuing final orders for the Sumter expedition. The President continued to hesitate—or met opposition.

It was still persistently urged that the authorities at Charleston should be notified of the President's intention to send supplies to the garrison, a measure which was opposed as likely to defeat the purpose of the expedition. Mr. Fox, who was to be in command, had, under orders of the President, gone to New York on the 30th of March, to make necessary preparations; but not receiving expected instructions, which the discussion in the Cabinet delayed, he returned to Washington on the 3d of April. Only twelve days then remained until the supplies in Sumter would be exhausted. Further postponement would defeat the object of the expedition. The result was a compromise. The President decided he would send a messenger to Charleston when the expedition sailed, but not before, to notify Governor Pickens of the fact, and that the object was peaceful, and that no force would be used unless the attempt to provision the garrison was resisted.

Immediately on this final decision the following orders were prepared and issued by the Secretaries of War and Navy. My instructions to Captain Mercer, in command of the Powhatan, were submitted by myself personally to the President, and by him were carefully scrutinized and approved:

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, April 4, 1861.

Captain G. V. Fox, Washington, D. C.

SIR:

It having been decided to succor Fort Sumter, you have been selected for this important duty. Accordingly, you will take charge of the transports in New York, having the troops and supplies on board, to the entrance of Charleston harbor; and endeavor, in the first instance, to deliver the subsistence. If you are opposed in this, you are directed to report the fact to the senior naval officer of the harbor, who will be instructed by the Secretary of the Navy to use his entire force to open a passage, when you will if possible effect an entrance and place both the troops and supplies in Fort Sumter.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

SIMON CAMERON, Secretary of War.

(Confidential.)

NAVY DEPARTMENT, April 5, 1861.

Captain SAMUEL MERCER,
Commanding U. S. steamer Powhatan, N. Y.

The United States steamers Powhatan, Pawnee, Pocahontas, and Harriet Lane will compose a naval force under your command, to be sent to the vicinity of Charleston, S. C., for the purpose of aiding in carrying out the objects of an expedition of which the War Department has charge.

The primary object of the expedition is to provision Fort Sumter, for which purpose the War Department will furnish the necessary transports. Should the authorities of Charleston permit the fort to be supplied, no further particular service will be required of the force under your command; and after being satisfied that supplies have been received at the fort, the Powhatan, Pocahontas, and Harriet Lane will return to New York, and the Pawnee to Washington.

Should the authorities at Charleston, however, refuse to permit, or attempt to prevent the vessel or vessels having supplies on board from entering the harbor, or from peaceably proceeding to Fort Sumter, you will protect the transports or boats of the expedition in the object of their mission, disposing of your force in such manner as to open the way for their ingress, and afford as far as practicable security to the men and boats, and repelling if necessary all obstructions toward provisioning the fort and reinforcing it; for in case of a resistance to the peaceable primary object of the expedition, a reinforcement of the garrison will also be attempted. These purposes will be under the supervision of the War Department, which has charge of the expedition. The expedition has been intrusted to Captain G. V. Fox, with whom you will put yourself in communication, and coöperate with him to accomplish and carry into effect its object.

You will leave New York with the Powhatan in time to be off Charleston bar, ten miles distant from and due east of the light-house, on the morning of the 11th instant, there to await the arrival of the transport or transports with troops and stores. The Pawnee and Pocahontas will be

ordered to join you there at the time mentioned, and also the Harriet Lane, which latter vessel has been placed under the control of this Department for this service.

On the termination of the expedition, whether it be peaceable or otherwise, the several vessels under your command will return to the respective ports, as above directed, unless some unforeseen circumstance should prevent.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, April 5, 1861.

Commander S. C. ROWAN,

Commanding U. S. steamer Pawnee, Norfolk, Va.

SIR:

After the Pawnee shall have been provisioned at Norfolk you will proceed with her to sea, and on the morning of the 11th instant appear off Charleston bar, ten miles distant from and due east of the light-house, where you will report to Captain Samuel Mercer, of the Powhatan, for special service. Should he not be there you will await his arrival.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.

Sealed instructions similar to those issued to Commander Rowan were sent to Commander Gillis, of the Pocahontas, and to Captain Faunce, of the revenue cutter Harriet Lane, which vessel had been transferred for the occasion by the Secretary of the Treasury to the Navy Department.

I also learned that the President had himself sent the following telegram to the commandant of the Brooklyn Navy-yard on the 1st of April in relation to the Powhatan, corresponding with mine of that date, and received at the same moment with it. This, it will be observed, was on the 1st of April, when he was signing papers, many, as he said, without reading, and some hours before my interview with him concerning the papers brought me by Mr. Nicolay. The telegram was probably prepared for his signature and signed by him under the arrangement of Mr. Seward and his associates, who had entirely dif-

ferent objects in view from the legitimate one of the War and Navy Departments.

WASHINGTON, D. C., April 1, 1861
—Received at Brooklyn 6:50 P.M.

To the Commandant of the Navy-yard.

Fit out the Powhatan to go to sea at the earliest possible moment. Orders by a confidential messenger go forward to-morrow.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

The time specified for the squadron to rendezvous off Charleston light was brief, but the emphatic preparatory orders enabled us to get them off with unprecedented despatch. I congratulated myself on the energy and activity with which this work had been accomplished, and was prepared to await results, when Mr. Seward and his son Frederick called at Willard's about eleven o'clock at night on the 6th of April with a telegram from Meigs and Porter at New York, the purport of which was, that there was difficulty in completing arrangements, in consequence of conflicting orders from the Secretary of the Navy. I asked an explanation, for I knew of no movement with which my orders conflicted. Mr. Seward said he supposed the telegram related to some difficulty about Lieutenant Porter's taking command of the Powhatan. I insisted this must be a mistake, that Captain Mercer was in command of the Powhatan; that she was as he knew the flagship of the Sumter expedition, and had, I presumed, left that evening for her destination; that Lieutenant Porter had no orders to join that expedition; that he had sought and was under orders for the Pacific on coast survey service, and I supposed had left for that duty; that he was not from his rank entitled to any such command as the Powhatan, and I knew not what business he had in New York interfering with the measures of the Department, and embarrassing his superior officer, Captain Mercer, in the performance of his duty. Mr. Seward said there was some mistake, some misunderstanding; that Lieutenant Porter had been sent to New York under special orders from the President, of which

I had probably not been informed. I questioned whether the President would detach and send away an officer without at least informing the Department, certainly not to take command of a ship that was in commission; that such irregular proceedings would throw the departments and government into confusion, and were wholly inconsistent with correct and systematic administration. There were, it seemed, naval orders issued without the knowledge of the head of the Navy Department, or of any one connected with it. He suggested that perhaps Commodore Stringham had some facts. Barron was, by the instructions of the 1st of April, which Mr. Seward and his friends had prepared, to have been then in Stringham's place. I at once sent for Commodore Stringham, who had retired for the night. On his appearance he disclaimed all knowledge of this extraordinary proceeding.

Mr. Seward, without making any disclosure of the object in which Meigs and Porter were engaged, declared it was a measure of the President's. Late as it was, I insisted it was indispensable that we should have an immediate interview with him in order to prevent the failure of the Sumter expedition, as well as to have a right understanding of what the Government was about, and to clear up any clashing of orders. We accordingly repaired to the executive mansion, Commodore Stringham and Mr. Frederick Seward accompanying us. On our way thither, Mr. Seward remarked to me that, old as he was, he had learned a lesson from this experience, which was that he had better attend to his own business, not interfere with others, and confine his labors to his proper Department. To all of which I assented.

The President, who had not retired, although it was nearly midnight, was astonished and perplexed in regard to the statements which we made. He looked first at one and then at the other; read and re-read the telegram, and asked if I was not in error in regard to the flag-ship. I assured him I was not, and reminded him that I had read to him my orders to Captain Mercer on the day they were written, and they had met his approval. He recollected that circumstance, but not the name of the officer or the vessel—said he had become confused with

the names of Pocahontas and Powhatan. Commodore Stringham, to whom I had communicated the instructions, confirmed my statement; but to satisfy the President beyond peradventure, I went to the Department, although it was past midnight, and procured the press copy. On reading it, he distinctly recollected all the facts, and turning promptly to Mr. Seward said the Powhatan must be restored to Mercer; that he had never supposed he was interfering with the Sumter expedition; that on no consideration should it be defeated or rendered abortive. Mr. Seward thought it was now too late to correct the mistake; said he considered the other project the most important, and asked whether that would not be injured if the Powhatan was now withdrawn. The President would not discuss the subject, but was peremptory—said there was not the pressing necessity in the other case, which I learned was an enterprise for Pickens. As regarded Sumter, however, not a day was to be lost—that the orders of the Secretary of the Navy must be carried out, and he directed Mr. Seward to telegraph to that effect to New York without a moment's delay. Mr. Seward thought it might be difficult to get a telegram through, it was so late; but the President was imperative.

I learned from the President then, and more fully thereafter, that Mr. Seward, after the final decision to relieve Sumter, had been more solicitous and importunate than ever to send reinforcements to Pickens; that this had been the great object in view on the 1st of April, when those strange orders had been issued which he had incautiously signed; that it was considered important the Pickens movement should be secret—none of the Cabinet even had been advised of it. Mr. Seward had undertaken to get up that enterprise and give the necessary military and naval orders without consulting the War and Navy Departments. With this view, and to possess himself of technicalities, he had selected Captain Meigs, of the army, and Lieutenant Porter, of the navy, as his assistants and agents, and by the aid of these subordinate officers the Secretary of State had fitted out a combined military and naval expedition. Captain Meigs says, in a letter which he has published, "Mr. Seward carried me to the President, merely saying that he

thought the President ought to see some of the younger officers, and not consult only with men who, if the war broke out, could not mount a horse," alluding to General Scott, whose age and infirmities precluded him from active duties. When I questioned whether the officers of either service would obey the orders of the Secretary of State, the President said Mr. Seward had provided for that by persuading him to sign or countersign the orders. Such a practice, I stated, would lead to confusion in the Government. The head of each department was responsible for its own expenditures, and must know the *status* and acts of its own subordinates. If the Secretary of the Navy should need the immediate service of Lieutenant Porter, and were to send him orders demanding instant execution, and he could not be found, but was absent by the secret interference of the Secretary of State, or any other Secretary, without leave or knowledge of the Department, great embarrassment and confusion must follow. So in regard to Captain Meigs and others of the army. We had, moreover, a record in the Navy Department of every naval vessel, and of the service on which each ship in commission was detailed. By our record the Powhatan, under command of Captain Mercer, had gone to Charleston, and was thence to return. But this official record was not a true one. The vessel was lost to us. We knew nothing of her whereabouts, except what I incidentally learned through the Secretary of State. He was not responsible for the funds of either the Navy or War Departments, yet he had taken upon himself a large expenditure from each, and had issued naval and military orders without the knowledge of the heads of those departments. In doing this he had committed something more than a discourtesy towards his associates in the Cabinet. It was an assumption and exercise of authority that did not legitimately belong to him. The Secretary of State had cuddled with subordinates of other departments, and had I thought unfortunately, induced the President to sanction these strange proceedings by his signature.

The President never attempted to justify or excuse these transactions; always spoke of the doings of that 1st of April as unfortunate; said that we were all new in the administration;

that he permitted himself, with the best intentions, to be drawn into an impropriety without sufficient examination and reflection, but he was confident no similar error would again occur.

It has been said that the detachment of the Powhatan from the Sumter expedition was a deliberate contrivance to defeat it, by secretly withdrawing the flag-ship, without which success was impracticable if there was resistance to sending in supplies. The published correspondence of the rebel Commissioners and of Judge Campbell is cited as corroborating this assumption—that the Powhatan was purposely detached in order to compel evacuation, and enable the Secretary of State to preserve “faith as regards Sumter” with the rebel leaders. A comparison of dates in that correspondence, when pledges and assurances are alleged to have been given, with the proceedings and consultations of the Administration in cabinet from time to time in the months of March and April, goes far to verify the charge that there was an understanding between certain parties which made it necessary to defeat the Sumter expedition by detaching the flag-ship after all other measures to prevent relief had failed. It is not necessary here to inquire whether the Confederate Commissioners appeared in Washington on the day after the inauguration by any preconcert, or whether they delayed visiting Washington until the expiration of Mr. Buchanan’s term pursuant to arrangement or previous understanding of which the new Administration was ignorant.

The Hon. Montgomery Blair, in a speech of much historical interest, delivered by him at Clarksville, in Maryland, in August, 1865, declares that “Mr. Seward acted in concert with the Buchanan Administration during the last three months of its term. He was no doubt advised through Mr. Stanton, who was in Buchanan’s Cabinet, of the policy it had adopted in reference to the seizure of everything that appertained to the nation in the South. It was owing to the coalition then formed between Mr. Seward and Mr. Stanton that the latter became Secretary of War to Mr. Lincoln. He apprised Mr. Seward of this treaty of the War and Navy Departments under Buchanan to make no resistance to the policy of dissolving the Union—to offer no

coercion to impede its march to independence; and Mr. Seward's course showed that he approved and adopted that policy."

Mr. Blair, on the authority of Judge Campbell, charges Mr. Seward with giving a pledge to evacuate Fort Sumter; and Mr. Thurlow Weed, the intimate friend, companion, oracle, and organ of Mr. Seward, in some semi-official remarks on the rebel correspondence, justified the coalition, and says: "That Governor Seward conversed freely with Judge Campbell we do not deny, nor do we doubt that in these conversations, at one period, he intimated that Fort Sumter would be evacuated. He certainly believed so, founding his opinion upon a knowledge of General Scott's recommendation."

The assurance claimed to have been given on the 15th of March, that Sumter would be evacuated, it will be noted, was immediately after Commander Ward had abandoned the idea of relieving the garrison, and after Gen. Scott pronounced Mr. Fox's plan—which was feasible in February—now impracticable. It was repeated with a qualification on the 1st of April, the day on which orders were "extracted" from the President conferring on Meigs and Porter unlimited authority, and placing all the naval vessels at their disposal. It was reaffirmed on the 7th of April, the day after the Powhatan had sailed for Pickens instead of Sumter. The notification to Governor Pickens that supplies would be sent, which was officially communicated to him on the 8th, as soon as the squadron sailed; the secret and mysterious detachment of the flag-ship without the knowledge of the Secretary of the Navy or any one connected with the Navy Department or with the Sumter expedition, which the author of the proposition must have known would render the expedition abortive and the evacuation of the fort inevitable, have all of them the appearance of one persistent and connected purpose—whether in fulfilment of any pledge or understanding, is a point I shall not here discuss. They were matters of which I was at the time of their occurrence wholly uninformed, and when I learned them I could not, with a proper regard for the public service in that period of difficulty, have exposed them.

I therefore submitted to be blamed, while those who secretly brought them about escaped responsibility and censure.

There was certainly no necessity for taking from Captain Mercer his vessel and sending her to Pensacola, where most of the naval force of the home squadron was collected. She was, however, absolutely indispensable to the success of the Sumter expedition. Yet General Meigs says, in his published letter, "An order was extracted (from the President) on the recommendation of Secretary Seward, detaching the Powhatan from the Sumter expedition and sending her to Fort Pickens."

By this "extracted" order she was withdrawn from duties where her presence was all-essential, and sent to the Gulf, where she was not required. The ostensible object of this military and naval enterprise to Pickens, undertaken by the Secretary of State without the knowledge of the Secretary of War or the Secretary of the Navy, was the importance of strengthening that fortress; but the Secretary of State well knew that measures had already been taken to reinforce that post. The troops on the Brooklyn, lying off Pensacola, and destined to strengthen the garrison, which had been detained on board since January, in accordance with the agreement or understanding between Messrs. Holt and Toucey and some of the rebel leaders, had been ordered to disembark. As early as the 12th of March I had sent the Crusader, with orders from General Scott to Captain Vodges to land his command and assist Slemmer in defending Pickens. This order from the Lieutenant-General the senior naval officer on the station, Captain Adams, would not recognize, nor permit to be executed, in consequence of the agreement of the previous winter, that the Government would not reinforce its own garrison provided the insurgents would not attack it. Doubting, however, the correctness of his position, he sent Lieutenant Gwathmey, a special messenger, overland to Washington, stating his embarrassment, and asking of me specific orders. This messenger reached Washington on the 6th of April, and I that evening sent Lieutenant Worden, of subsequent Monitor fame, with a brief but explicit order to Captain Adams to land the troops. This was on the very evening, and

but a few hours before Mr. Seward, with his son, called on me with the telegram from Meigs and Porter in regard to the Powhatan. My order Lieutenant Worden committed to memory between Washington and Richmond, and then destroyed the writing, lest he should be arrested and searched. Travelling day and night, he reached Pensacola on the 12th of April, and the troops were disembarked and Pickens reinforced on the evening of the day that fire was opened on Sumter, and while that fort was being bombarded. The Powhatan, under command of Lieutenant Porter, which had been withdrawn from the Sumter expedition ostensibly to relieve Pickens, did not arrive off Pensacola until the 17th of April, five days after the fort had been reinforced and made safe by landing Vogdes's command, pursuant to the order sent from the Navy Department by Lieutenant Worden. There was, doubtless, an object in sending the Powhatan to Pensacola, and there was, of course, an object in secreting the fact, and withholding all knowledge of the enterprise from both the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy, who, of all others, should have known it. If that object was, as has been stated, not so much to relieve Pickens as to prevent the relief of Sumter and necessitate the evacuation, the object was attained. The pledge—"Faith in regard to Sumter—wait and see," will be understood. Faith may thereby have been kept with the rebel leaders, though faith towards the Secretaries of War and Navy may be less susceptible of explanation.

The following are the orders from the President which led to the withdrawal of the Powhatan from her destination, to the breaking of Captain Mercer's orders, and to his detachment from his vessel by a lieutenant without the knowledge of the Secretary of the Navy, and without any record of the transaction in the Navy Department:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, April 1, 1861.

Lieutenant D. D. Porter, U. S. Navy.

SIR:

You will proceed to New York, and, with the least possible delay, assuming command of any naval steamer avail-

able, proceed to Pensacola harbor, and at any cost or risk prevent any expedition from the main land reaching Fort Pickens or Santa Rosa Island.

You will exhibit this order to any Naval officer at Pensacola, if you deem it necessary, after you have established yourself within the harbor, and will request coöperation by the entrance of at least one other steamer.

This order, its object, and your destination will be communicated to no person whatever until you reach the harbor of Pensacola.

Recommended—WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, April 1, 1861.

Lieutenant D. D. Porter will take command of the steamer Powhatan, or any other U. S. steamer ready for sea which he may deem most fit for the service to which he has been assigned by confidential instructions of this date.

All officers are commanded to afford him all such facilities as he may deem necessary for getting to sea as soon as possible.

He will select the officers to accompany him.

Recommended—WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

WASHINGTON, EXECUTIVE MANSION, April 1, 1861.

All officers of the army and navy to whom this order may be exhibited will aid, by every means in their power, the expedition under the command of Colonel Harvey Brown, supplying him with men and material, and coöperating with him as he may desire.

A true copy:

M. C. MEIGS, Captain of Engineers,
Chief Engineer of said Expedition.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

These orders, signed by the President, were part of the papers prepared by Mr. Seward, with the assistance of Captain Meigs and Lieutenant Porter, on the 1st of April, when the Executive order to create a new bureau, and directing me to take Barron, the agent and mediator in the Pickens intrigue and captain in the rebel service, into my confidence, and make him the detailing officer of the Navy Department, was "extracted" from the President and sent to me. The papers relating to the Pickens expedition were not disclosed to me, however, until after the midnight interview of the 6th of April, and after the Sumter expedition had sailed on an abortive mission. Apprehensive, it would seem, that the general order of the 1st of April to Lieutenant Porter might not be conclusive with Captain Mercer, who was a strict disciplinarian, and would hesitate to obey any order that did not emanate regularly from or pass through the Navy Department, the following specific letter was prepared on the 2d of April, and the President's signature thereto procured:

WASHINGTON CITY, April 2, 1861.

Captain S. MERCER, U. S. Navy.

SIR:

Circumstances render it necessary to place in command of your ship (and for a special purpose) an officer who is fully informed and instructed in relation to the wishes of the Government; and you will therefore consider yourself detached. But in taking this step the Government does not in the least reflect upon your efficiency or patriotism, but on the contrary have the fullest confidence in your ability to perform any duty required of you. Hoping soon to be able to give you a better command than the one you now enjoy, and trusting that you will have full confidence in the disposition of the Government towards you,

I remain, etc.,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

A true copy:

M. C. MEIGS, Captain of Engineers,

Chief Engineer of Expedition of Colonel Brown.

Captain Mercer wrote me on the 8th the following letter, explaining under what circumstances he had given up his vessel:

NAVY-YARD, New York, April, 8, 1861.

To the Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington City.

SIR:

Your "confidential" instructions of the 5th instant were received on the next day, and I was on the eve of carrying them out when Lieutenant D. D. Porter, of the navy, and Captain Meigs, of the army, came to me, showing such written instructions from the President, and verbally communicating other facts showing their authority from this high source, that Lieutenant Porter's being placed in command of the Powhatan was virtually necessary, and that the President's positive commands to both of these officers were that no deviation from his instructions should be made unless by his own direction.

Under these circumstances, I regarded the order from the President of the United States as imperative, and accordingly placed Lieutenant Porter in command of the Powhatan.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

SAMUEL MERCER, Captain.

Mr. Seward, in obedience to the midnight mandate of President Lincoln, on the 6th of April sent the following telegram to Lieutenant Porter, but the Powhatan had left the Navy-yard when the despatch was received:

Give up the Powhatan to Captain Mercer. SEWARD.

Commander, subsequently Rear-Admiral Foote was at that time Executive Officer of the Brooklyn Navy-yard, and on receiving this telegram of Mr. Seward, he despatched a tug in pursuit. But this despatch was a mere telegram signed "Seward," while Lieutenant Porter had full written power from the President, which, even if there were no other understanding, he felt would be his justification in retaining the Powhatan from her

legitimate commander. He therefore continued on with the vessel, and the Sumter expedition was robbed of its flag-ship.

These extraordinary proceedings, wherein the Secretary of State assumed the duties and functions of the War and Navy Departments, without the knowledge of the head of either of those departments, caused surprise and for a time some little dissatisfaction. The President did not conceal his mortification and regret at the occurrence, but with characteristic unselfishness assumed all the blame, declared it was his neglect, and in a letter to Mr. Fox, who felt annoyed that his plan had failed, President Lincoln said: "By accident, for which you were in no wise responsible, and possibly I to some extent was, you were deprived of a war vessel with her men, which you deemed of great importance to the enterprise." It was, however, no fault originating with him, but a piece of maladministration, of improper and inexcusable interference by one department with others, of apparent distrust where there should have been unrestricted confidence, and—aside from any pledge to or complicity with the rebel leaders—had other serious objections, which the President assured me more than once would never be repeated. It was not. Nor had I ever after a like experience. Neither then nor ever during our subsequent intimate personal and official relations, in many and great trials, was there any misunderstanding between us, nor did I ever have occasion to doubt the upright sincerity and honest intentions of that extraordinary man, who to the last moment of his life honored me with his confidence and friendship. He had, however, been once led into error, and there had been manifested by the head of one department a disposition to interfere with and manage other departments, so subversive of correct administration that, to guard against future similar proceedings so far as the navy was concerned, and to prevent the confusion that must inevitably follow from such irregularities, I took occasion, as opportunity presented, to caution naval officers in regard to the orders which they might receive. Commodore Paulding was going at that time to New York, and I sent by him to Commander Foote, an old and valued friend from the days "when

we were boys together," a word on the importance of receiving orders from the proper source. When these suggestions were communicated I had not seen the secret orders signed by the President, nor was I aware how far he had been committed to these irregular proceedings. Commander Foote wrote me, after his interview with Commodore Paulding, the following letter:

(Private.)

NAVY-YARD, New York, April 9, 1861.

HON. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

DEAR SIR:

Commodore Paulding quietly informed me this morning, that you had suggested to him to say to me in a kind way, that I had better execute no orders unless coming from you.

I fully appreciate the delicate manner in which you have communicated your impressions to me, but I beg to say, most respectfully, in my own vindication, that in reference to the sailing of the *Powhatan*, specially referred to, I did detain that vessel as far as I had authority to do it, on receiving your telegram to do so, and until Captain Mercer, my superior officer, informed me that he should transfer his ship to Lieutenant-Commander Porter, who would sail with her, as he did, on the 6th instant. Again, in referring to the events of the past week, I believe that in a personal interview I could fully show that I have pursued the only course which could possibly have accomplished the work which has been executed; and in case of the *Powhatan*, after preparing her for sea in the shortest space of time, agreeably to your orders, as I was only a commander and not the commandant, my authority over her ceased, and she was controlled by my superior officer. In fact, I was not consulted, nor was I even present, when Captains Mercer, Meigs, and Porter in consultation concluded that the ship should be placed in the hands of Captain, or rather Lieutenant-Commanding Porter.

I have the honor to be, with much respect and esteem,
your obedient servant,

ANDREW H. FOOTE.

When the President, after much hesitation, finally decided that an attempt should be made to supply Fort Sumter, it was coupled, as stated, with the further decision that the authorities at Charleston should be informed of his intention—that supplies would be sent peaceably or otherwise by force. This notification and qualification was acquiesced in, though none of the Cabinet except Mr. Seward were advised of any pledge, or pledges, or understanding with the rebel Commissioners, and that he was a party I have no knowledge except what is communicated in the statements of the rebel Commissioners, the remarks of Mr. Blair, and the semi-official admissions of Mr. Thurlow Weed, the confidential friend of Mr. S., and I may add also by the attending circumstances. Indeed, it was understood those Commissioners were not to be recognized or treated with. If, as is claimed, any promise was given them, directly or by implication, that Fort Sumter should be evacuated, it was unauthorized. At one time, after hearing the views of Generals Scott and Totten, and Major Anderson and his officers, the opinion of each of the members of the Administration was obtained, and all, with the exception of Mr. Blair, came to the conclusion that it would be impossible to provision the garrison. The pledge or assurance that the fort should be evacuated is claimed to have been given through Judge Campbell at that time. It was, if made, a communication of Cabinet consultations and understandings that were yet in embryo, and which the results showed were not conclusive. In fact, the final decision was in direct opposition to and in conflict with such a pledge, for it was decided the fort should not be evacuated without an attempt to relieve it. The first assurance, given in March, is claimed to have been unqualified that Sumter should be evacuated. But Judge Campbell says he received on the 1st of April, from the Secretary of State, the following statement in writing: "I am satisfied the Government will not undertake to supply Fort Sumter without giving notice to Governor P." On the very day of its date the order to Porter was given, and on the succeeding day the further order which displaced Mercer and withdrew the Powhatan from the Sumter expedition was, to use the word of General Meigs, "extracted" from the President without

his being aware of the effect of those orders. Judge Campbell and the Commissioners appear to have rested quietly under the modified assurance of the 1st of April; but alarmed by the preparations which the Government was making in New York, Judge C., on the 7th of April, addressed a note to Mr. Seward and received in reply: "Faith as to Sumter fully kept—wait and see." When this pledge was given the Powhatan had left, not for Sumter as ordered by the Government under command of Captain Mercer, but for Pensacola under Lieutenant Porter.

The expedition, without the flag-ship, sailed on the 6th and 7th of April. On the 8th Governor Pickens was officially advised of the fact, and, as the vessels were to rendezvous ten miles off Charleston light on the 11th, there was ample time allowed the insurgents to make preparations for resistance. There would seem to have been a deliberate purpose to render the Sumter expedition—the first of the war—abortive; to prevent the garrison from receiving supplies; to compel Major Anderson to surrender and evacuate the fort; for every step taken, every measure adopted, was met and thwarted by counteracting measures, most of them secret, emanating from or sanctioned by the President, who was unsuspectingly made to defeat his own orders and purposes. How far the conferees of different parties who held counsel or were in communication on these matters in the winter of 1861, had become committed to or were complicated in any scheme or policy in relation to the final disposition of Fort Sumter, has never been stated. The relief of the garrison and the abandonment of the fortress were questions earnestly discussed in the Buchanan Cabinet; but action was postponed until his retirement. Under what arrangement, pledge, or understanding, if any, that postponement took place, is not publicly known. Mr. Lincoln and his Cabinet, with one exception perhaps, were not parties to it.

The secessionists seem to have anticipated there would be a peaceful surrender of the fort; that the Confederate Commissioners would be eventually received and their diplomatic character recognized; that the wayward sisters would be permitted to go in peace; and it was prophesied that a satisfactory adjustment would take place in ninety days. But hopes proved

delusive and prophecies failures, for scarcely half that number of days elapsed after the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln when the great conflict commenced at Sumter.

An interesting history of the Sumter expedition has been given by Mr. Fox, who commanded it, and is published in Boynton's "History of the Navy during the Rebellion," which I should be glad to incorporate into this statement, but am prevented by its length. The squadron encountered a gale soon after leaving Sandy Hook, and none of the vessels reached the place of rendezvous until the morning of the 12th of April. The rebels had been informed on the 8th of the intention of the Administration to send supplies to the garrison, and a correspondence was immediately opened on receiving this notice between Beauregard, in command of the insurgent forces, and the rebel government at Montgomery, ending with a demand of immediate surrender. On the refusal of Major Anderson, fire was opened at 4:30 A.M. of the 12th on the fortress, and Mr. Fox, who arrived in the army transport *Baltic*, found only the *Harriet Lane* at the rendezvous. The *Pawnee* arrived a 6 A.M. Mr. Fox at once boarded her and requested her commander to stand in to the bar with him; but Commander Rowan replied, "that his orders required him to remain ten miles east of the light and await the *Powhatan*." The *Baltic* and the *Harriet Lane* therefore proceeded, and as they neared the land the firing was heard and the smoke and shells from the batteries were visible. No other vessel of the squadron arrived that day, but, says Mr. Fox, "feeling sure that the *Powhatan* would arrive during the night, as she had sailed from New York two days before us, I stood out to the appointed rendezvous and made signals all night. The morning of the 13th was thick and foggy." No *Powhatan* appeared. In the course of the day he "learned for the first time that Commander Rowan had received a note from Captain Mercer, of the *Powhatan*, dated at New York on the 6th, the day he sailed, stating the *Powhatan* was detached by superior authority from the duty to which she was assigned off Charleston, and had sailed for another destination. I left New York two days afterwards without any intimation of this change."

Mr. Fox adds: "My plan for supplying Fort Sumter required three hundred sailors, a full supply of armed launches, and three tugs. The Powhatan carried the sailors and launches, and when this vessel was about to leave in obedience to the orders of the Secretary of the Navy, two officers, Lieutenant D. D. Porter, U. S. Navy, and Captain M. C. Meigs, U. S. Engineers, presented themselves on board with an order from the President of the United States, authorizing the former to take any vessel whatever in commission and proceed immediately to the Gulf of Mexico. This order did not pass through the Navy Department, and was unknown to the Secretary of the Navy, and when signed by the President he was not conscious that his signature would deprive me of the means to accomplish an object which he held to be of vital importance." The squadron with supplies, but without flag-ship and men and launches which had been provided on her, was powerless. It might have been unavailing after the gale separated it, and the insurgents were notified and had time to prepare for its reception. But the strange detachment of the Powhatan would, under any circumstances, have rendered the expedition fruitless. Whatever unpleasant feeling may have existed at the moment on the part of any member of the Cabinet or of the President himself in regard to the failure of the Sumter expedition, or the fitting out of a military expedition by the Secretary of State to strengthen the already reinforced garrison at Pickens, to which was surreptitiously and needlessly added an important naval vessel, ordered to other duty, was of short duration. It was, however, an experience not without its lesson, and resulting benefits to the Administration, for it contributed to settle in some degree and define the province of the different departments of the Government under President Lincoln. Until these occurrences there was, in some quarters, an impression, not to say assumption, that the Secretary of State occupied in the Administration a position analogous to that of the Premier in Great Britain; that he was virtually the Executive—the acting President; and that his orders extended to and controlled the other departments. The President soon corrected these great errors. He let it be understood that he was President in fact as well as in name, and though

not exempt from the influence of associates, he was particularly careful thereafter that no one of the Secretaries should arrogate, and, without assent or knowledge, exercise the functions of another. His trust and confidence was given to each one of his political family without reserve or limitation. Each was but a part of the Executive, of which the President was chief.

Prior to these events there had been no regular stated Cabinet meetings. The members were frequently convened, almost invariably by special invitation through the Secretary of State, sometimes in full session; sometimes only such as were particularly interested in the subject-matter were invited, with the exception of the Secretary of State, who usually issued the notices to the heads of departments to assemble, and was always present on every occasion and whatever were the measures under consideration. To obviate difficulties and prevent a recurrence of such proceedings as had taken place, as well as to avail himself of the views of each and all his Cabinet on public affairs, the President soon after directed that there should be regular Cabinet sessions at meridian on Tuesdays and Fridays, at which important measures of administration should be submitted.

The attempt by the Government, in the discharge of its imperative duty, to send supplies to a garrison in one of the forts belonging to the United States, met, it will be seen, with many embarrassments, and when finally made, was forcibly resisted by the insurgents at Charleston, who then and there placed themselves in open, defiant rebellion, fired the first gun, committed the first act of war, and commenced the first assault on the flag, the troops, and a national fortress. After a bombardment of two days, Fort Sumter was evacuated on the 14th of April, and on the next day, the 15th, President Lincoln issued his proclamation calling for seventy-five thousand men, and convening Congress in special session on the 4th of July.

Fort Pickens

FACTS IN RELATION TO THE REINFORCEMENT OF FORT PICKENS, IN THE SPRING OF 1861

The most important fort along the Gulf Coast which the Federal navy retained throughout the Civil War was Fort Pickens in Pensacola Harbor. To demonstrate clearly that the Navy Department had taken steps to secure this installation in Florida long before David Dixon Porter arrived aboard the *Powhatan*, the Secretary of the Navy here recalls the details connected with the relief of the Fort.

FLORIDA, IN MANY particulars a favored State, became from the time of its admission into the Union almost a dependency of South Carolina, and followed and seconded that nullifying and seceding commonwealth in all its wayward movements. From its locality as a key to the Gulf of Mexico, the maritime outlet of the great central valley of the Union, and as regards the interests of commerce and navigation generally, the southern peninsula was of value and importance to the country. The limited population of the territory, which at the time of its admission was hardly equal to what was requisite for a single representative district, gave it little claim to recognition as a State. The territory was originally purchased from Spain, during the Monroe administration, at a cost of several millions; but many times the amount of the first purchase had been expended from the Federal treasury in subduing and expelling

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the wild and refractory population, consisting of Indians, negroes, mixed breeds, piratical adventurers, and outlaws, who had made the swamps and everglades a place of refuge so long as it was a province of Spain. In 1845 the few and not yet homogeneous inhabitants, were organized and admitted into the Federal Union as a State. The act was premature and unwise, but it was done in order to preserve what the politicians of that day termed "the equilibrium of the States." This theory of the "equilibrium" was one of the many strange compromises or expedients which were resorted to by certain conspicuous party leaders, who made it a study to evade or postpone immediate action on difficult and exciting questions as they arose, instead of boldly meeting and honestly disposing of them. By this particular compromise or theory of "equilibrium," no free State, whatever might be the number of its inhabitants, its claims, or its self-sustaining ability as a distinct community, could be recognized and admitted as a State into the Federal Union, unless there was corresponding slave territory also admitted, no matter how few its inhabitants, or small their ability to support a government, nor how meagre their claim to State recognition. Florida, petted and nursed for nearly thirty years after its acquisition, a constant draft and drag on the Federal treasury, with an insufficient population, and with no claims whatever to be a State, was admitted into the Federal Union in 1845, as an offset to Iowa, in order to preserve the equilibrium compromise; a compromise which served to beget and foster that sectional hostility which eventuated in civil war that had for its object, and which threatened the destruction of the Union.

The delegate from Florida when a territory, and at the time of its admission as a State, was David L. Yulee. He was elected its first Senator, and held that position until the passage of the ordinance of secession, which assumed to sever the connection of that purchased territory and feeble community with the Federal Government, when he resigned his seat and withdrew from Congress. Yulee was of Hebrew origin. His father, if I mistake not, was a Barbary Jew. He first took his seat in Congress under the name of David Levy, to which he subse-

quently appended the name of Yulee. He was not destitute of ability, but like too many of our legislators, his views were narrow and mercenary, and his talents and efforts were to a great extent employed in obtaining local favors from the Government for his State and himself, rather than in national legislation, and measures of broad and expansive statesmanship. Favored by circumstances, he had great influence over the sparse and heterogeneous population, composed in a great measure of adventurers, and was active and potent in the secession movement. Yulee is brother-in-law of the Hon. Joseph Holt, the present Judge-Advocate-General of the Army, and Secretary of War when Florida seceded; each had married a daughter of Charles A. Wickliffe of Kentucky, who was Postmaster-General under John Tyler.

The ordinance of secession, which declared this feeble and scattered community "a sovereign and independent nation," was passed by a State Convention which had been assembled on the 10th of January, 1861, and the Navy-yard at Pensacola was seized by the rebels on the 12th, two days after. Lieutenant Adam J. Slemmer, who was at the time in command of Fort McRae, hastily evacuated it when he became aware of the treason and treachery on foot, and with about eighty men took possession of Pickens, a more important and formidable fortress, on Santa Rosa Island. This post, with Fort Jefferson at the Dry Tortugas, and Fort Taylor at Key West—the two last lying off the Florida coast—remained in possession of the Government when the change of administration took place on the 4th of March. It was asserted on the 10th of January, by the Convention which adopted the ordinance of secession, that "the State of Florida is hereby declared a sovereign and independent nation." But, by an understanding which the Federal Government soon after entered into with certain rebel leaders, the "sovereign and independent nation" of Florida consented to abstain from extending its authority over the forts of the United States by any belligerent act, provided the Federal Government would in the mean time remain inactive. Under this understanding or truce with those who were plotting the disruption of the Union, the dignity, power, and rightful authority of the Federal Gov-

ernment during the winter of 1861 seemed to the conspirators and to the world—like the expiring Administration—near their termination.

In the exercise of its power as a "sovereign and independent nation," Florida had taken possession of the Navy-yard and forts at Pensacola, with the exception of Pickens, which the "nation" and its abettors forbore to attack for the time being under the truce referred to; and from the same cause, or from lack of ability and means, the winter passed away without that "nation's" occupying Forts Taylor and Jefferson, on the Tortugas and at Key West.

Several statements, official, semi-official, and otherwise, have been made in relation to the relief of these forts, and especially in regard to the first reinforcement of Fort Pickens, in the spring of 1861. None of the published accounts present a full and correct narrative of all the facts and circumstances connected with the relief and reinforcement, on two several occasions, of that fortress. The differing statements may be accounted for, in part at least, by the fact that there were several movements at different dates, and by different parties, to effect that object, and to provide for the security of Pickens and points off the Florida coast.

The Buchanan Administration, after the surrender of the Navy-yard at Pensacola, had as early as January sent out an artillery force under Captain Vogdes, on board the steamer Brooklyn, to reinforce the garrison in Fort Pickens; but before the troops were landed the truce was entered into that the Government would pursue a policy of inaction, provided the rebels would make no assault. This truce or armistice, though not reduced to writing, seems to have been faithfully observed by those who were administering the Government, and, as regards Pickens, by those who were plotting its overthrow. At Pensacola, as at Charleston, the Government under Mr. Buchanan remained passive, while the conspirators were active and unrestrained. This non-coercive policy of the Government appears to have been adopted after the troops to reinforce Pickens had embarked at Fortress Monroe upon the Brooklyn, but before that vessel reached Pensacola. Consequently, Captain

Vogdes's command was not permitted to land, but was detained on board until after the expiration of Mr. Buchanan's term of service. This suspension of action by the Government, and abstinence from the exercise of rightful power—a compromise with those who were openly resisting and defying Federal authority—this arrangement by which the Government agreed not to reinforce its own garrisons in its own forts, as at Sumter and Pickens—this consenting that the troops should be restrained from landing, and detained for weeks on shipboard within sight of their destination—had a most unhappy and depressing influence on the friends of the Union, and tended to inspire and encourage those who were opposed to it.

When the change of administration took place on the 4th of March, and Mr. Lincoln entered upon his duties as Chief Magistrate, he found the Government without extra means or preparation to maintain its power or enforce its authority. The retiring Administration had done nothing to suppress the insurrection, while the rebels, under the quasi-armistice, had been active and untiring in promoting it. A change of policy, as well as a change of administration, took place on the inauguration of President Lincoln; but some little time and preparation were necessary to get the Government on a permanent footing and in working order. As rapidly as possible, the new Administration took up the various subjects, civil, military, and political, demanding attention. The condition of affairs through the whole South was deplorable. Among the matters of immediate interest were those which related to the few military posts at the South that were still retained by the Government with small and wholly insufficient garrisons, and the Secretary of the Treasury was extremely solicitous in regard to the lights and light-houses on the Southern coast. He early brought the subject to the notice of the President and Cabinet, and a correspondence between two officers attached to the Light-house Board, which had been submitted to him, hastened action. It seems that while the higher functionaries who administered the Government had through the winter been tampering with those who were in insurrection, and entering into a truce or understanding with them to tide over the few remaining weeks

of their official life, there had been vigilance and activity among officers then in subordinate positions. Commander (now Rear-Admiral) Jenkins and Captain (subsequently Major-General) Wm. F. Smith, familiarly known as Baldy Smith, were in the winter of 1861 attached to the Light-house Board, the former Naval Secretary, the latter as Engineer Secretary. These two officers, thus associated, freely interchanged views. Both were impressed with the danger that threatened Fort Jefferson and Fort Taylor, which would, if no steps were taken to prevent it, be likely to pass into the possession of the rebels, to the great annoyance of our commerce and injury to the country. Privateers would make the Tortugas and Key West places of refuge in case of war; and by the destruction of the light-houses in that dangerous vicinity navigation would be rendered insecure. They communicated their apprehensions to General Dix, at that time Secretary of the Treasury, and their purpose to ascertain the condition of things in that quarter. Their suggestions, without entering into details, were approved. Captain Smith therefore took the steamer for Havana, and visited Tortugas and Key West under the pretext of inspecting the lights. Soon after the change of administration Commander Jenkins received a letter from Captain Smith, who had been to Dry Tortugas and Fort Taylor, saw the danger to which they were exposed, and satisfied himself what was best to be done for their safety. The contents of the letter were communicated to Mr. Chase, who had relieved General Dix as Secretary of the Treasury, and to whom it was their duty to report. Secretary Chase was alive to the importance of the subject, and forthwith made known to the President and Cabinet the information he had received. Commander Jenkins was immediately put in communication with General Scott and myself in relation to these matters. Prompt action was required to save the stations off the coast. But more interesting and important perhaps than either was the condition of things at Pensacola and Fort Pickens. General Scott was much exercised on these matters, and became particularly solicitous that Vogdes's command should be disembarked and Fort Pickens relieved. At a late hour on the 11th of March, the

day, I think, on which Secretary Chase gave the information received from Commander Jenkins, General Scott made application to me for a naval vessel to convey a bearer of despatches from the War Department to Fort Pickens. There were at that time but two or three vessels in the Atlantic ports that were available. Which of them was best adapted to the service was a question, and who of the officers was most reliable for this duty was to be carefully considered. Secrecy was indispensable; but the Navy Department, as well as all the other departments of the Government, was in a demoralized condition. Of those best informed and most capable of giving an opinion, it was difficult for me, not then a week in office, to decide in every instance who were to be trusted. Commander Ward, an old acquaintance from boyhood, I knew was faithful. He was stationed on the receiving ship at Brooklyn, but had been summoned to Washington in relation to an expedition to reinforce Fort Sumter. This project he had relinquished, and was on the point of returning to New York when General Scott preferred his request. On receiving it, I sent a messenger, who overtook Commander Ward at the railroad depot, and requested him to meet me that evening at the Department. Secretary Chase notified Commander Jenkins to join Commander Ward and myself at my office at nine o'clock that evening. Both officers were prompt in their attendance. No persons except my doorkeeper and the watchmen were in the building when we came together. The subject-matter was discussed in confidence; and it was concluded that the Crusader, Commander T. A. Craven, and the Mohawk, Commander J. H. Strong, were both available, and each of their commanders faithful and to be trusted. The Crusader, Captain Craven, was selected. Three years later this gallant officer commanded the iron-clad Tecumseh, and went down and was lost with his vessel, which was destroyed by a torpedo opposite Fort Morgan, when Farragut entered the Bay of Mobile, in 1864. The following order was prepared that evening and intrusted to Commander Ward to deliver personally to Captain Craven:

[Confidential.]

NAVY DEPARTMENT, March 11, 1861.

Commander T. A. M. CRAVEN,
Commanding U.S.S. Crusader.

SIR:

A bearer of despatches from the Government will present himself to you for passage to the United States steamer Brooklyn, supposed to be off Fort Pickens, Pensacola harbor. You will proceed to that locality with all practical despatch, place the bearer of despatches on board the Brooklyn, and then make the best of your way to Key West, where you will communicate with Judge Marvin of the United States Court, and afford every protection in your power to the United States authorities, and to the naval stores, light-house, and other United States property there.

The Department desires that you will not absent yourself from Key West or its immediate vicinity, unless ordered to do so from here, or in your judgment it becomes necessary to do so to protect the reef lights.

Commander Pickering, U. S. Navy, the Light-house Inspector on the Florida coast, should be conferred with with reference to the safety of the lights on the Florida reefs; and any assistance that you may be able and deem necessary to afford him, without jeopardizing interests at Key West, should be given to him.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.

On the following day General Scott informed me that he might be unable to spare an officer to go to Pensacola with his orders; and if the naval officer was faithful, he could as well as a special messenger deliver the despatches to Captain Vogdes on the Brooklyn. With an assurance that Commander Craven was reliable, the subject was left at his option. At the same time when stating his embarrassment, General Scott made a requisition for another vessel to convoy a transport or transports to Texas, to bring North the troops abandoned by Twiggs when he deserted. The importance of a sufficient force at Key

West to retain that important post, suggested the expediency of leaving a portion of the Texas troops at that station. I requested Commander Jenkins to call on General Scott with this suggestion, which he did. It met the approval of the Lieutenant General, and he agreed to and did order Major French, and four companies returning from Texas, to stop at Key West. In order to comply with the army requisitions for two naval vessels, one to proceed to Pensacola and one to convoy the army transport, it became necessary to send both the *Crusader* and the *Mohawk* to the Gulf. I therefore, on the 12th of March, addressed the following despatch to Commander Foote, executive officer of the Brooklyn Navy-yard—Commodore Breese, the commandant, was absent on other duty:

[Confidential.]

NAVY DEPARTMENT, March 12, 1861.

Commander A. H. FOOTE,
Commandant Navy-yard, New York.

SIR:

I sent an order yesterday by Commander James H. Ward, U. S. N. to Lieutenant-Commanding Craven, to proceed on certain service therein named. It is now necessary to send either the *Crusader* or *Mohawk* to convoy the steamer *Empire City*, employed on army duty.

You will please despatch, immediately on the receipt of this order, either the *Crusader* or *Mohawk* to the Quarantine, and direct the commanding officer to accompany the *Empire City* on her voyage, and continue with her as long as protection may be deemed necessary by the army or other officer in charge, for the protection of the persons and public property embarked.

In case you find it necessary to convoy the *Empire City*, you will direct Lieutenant-Commanding Craven to return the order to him dated yesterday by this Department to you, and you will hand it to Lieutenant-Commanding Strong of the *Mohawk*, with instructions to proceed and execute those orders in the same manner as though the order had been originally addressed to him.

The War Department may not send a special messenger,

as was indicated in the order to the commander of the *Crusader*, but in that event a letter will be sent to be delivered to the commander of the U. S. steamer *Brooklyn*.

Colonel Tompkins, U. S. A., New York, should be conferred with before despatching these vessels.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.

There was delay in the departure of one or both of these vessels, in consequence of difficulties in the Adjutant-General's office in detailing the companies which were to stop at Key West. The voyage of the *Crusader* was also somewhat protracted, and after a fortnight and more had elapsed the failure to receive tidings from Pensacola began to give us great solicitude. Several days of painful uncertainty were passed when, on the afternoon of the 6th of April, an officer, travel-stained and much exhausted, entered my room at the Department, and announced himself as Lieutenant Gwathmey, with despatches from Captain Adams, in command of the squadron off Pensacola. Unstrapping a belt from beneath his garments, he handed me a package which contained the following letter:

U. S. FRIGATE *SABINE* OFF PENSACOLA, April 1, 1861.

SIR:

I have the honor to enclose a copy of a letter addressed to me by Captain Vogdes, U. S. A., who is here in command of some troops sent out in January last to reinforce the garrison of Fort Pickens. I have declined to land the men as Captain Vogdes requests, as it would be in direct violation of the orders of the Navy Department under which I am acting. The instructions from General Scott to Captain Vogdes are of old date (March 12), and may have been given without a full knowledge of the condition of affairs here; they would be no justification. Such a step is too important to be taken without the clearest orders from proper authority. It would certainly be viewed as a hostile act, and would be resisted to the utmost. No one acquainted with the feelings of the military assembled under

General Bragg can doubt that it would be considered not only a declaration, but an act of war. It would be a serious thing to bring on by any precipitation a collision which may be entirely against the wishes of the Administration. At present both sides are faithfully observing the agreement entered into by the U. S. Government with Mr. Mallory and Colonel Chase. This agreement binds us not to reinforce Fort Pickens unless it shall be attacked or threatened. It binds them not to attack it unless we should attempt to reinforce it. I saw General Bragg on the 30th ult., who reassured me the conditions on their part should not be violated. While I cannot take on myself, under such insufficient authority as General Scott's order, the fearful responsibility of an act which seems to render civil war inevitable, I am ready at all times to carry out whatever orders I may receive from the Honorable the Secretary of the Navy.

In conclusion, I beg you will please to send me instructions as soon as possible, that I may be relieved from a painful embarrassment.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. A. ADAMS, Captain, senior officer present.
To the Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

U. S. FRIGATE SABINE, OFF PENSACOLA, FLA., April 1, 1861.
To Captain H. A. ADAMS,
commanding naval forces off Pensacola.

SIR:

Herewith I send you a copy of an order received by me last night. You will see by it that I am directed to land my command at the earliest opportunity. I have therefore to request that you will place at my disposal such boats and other means as will enable me to carry into effect the enclosed order.

Yours, etc.,

I. VOGDES, Captain First Artillery, commanding.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY, WASHINGTON,
March 12, 1861.

SIR:

At the first favorable moment you will land with your company, reinforce Fort Pickens, and hold the same until further notice.

Report frequently, if opportunities present themselves, on the condition of the fort and the circumstances around you.

I write by command of Lieutenant-General Scott.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. D. TOWNSEND, Assistant Adjutant-General.

Captain I. VOGDES, U. S. A., on board the U. S. sloop-of-war Brooklyn, off Fort Pickens, Pensacola harbor, Florida.

This information and the course of Captain Adams caused great disappointment. Parts of it were incomprehensible. The "orders of the Navy Department" alluded to, and the alleged agreement "entered into by the United States Government with Mr. Mallory and Colonel Chase," were matters of which the President and myself were not advised. We were aware, as was the whole country, that the Administration of Mr. Buchanan had acted on the do-nothing policy, and it was generally supposed the rebels permitted his Administration to expire without being molested, on condition the Government would remain inactive. We knew, however, of no written orders or truce of the character mentioned. In declining to recognize the orders of General Scott, and refusing to land the troops by reason of the truce referred to, Captain Adams was not altogether satisfied with his own decision, and hence had despatched Lieutenant Gwathmey express to me for specific orders.

Some suspicions were entertained of the fidelity of Captain Adams, whose sympathies were reported to be with the secessionists. His estate was in the South, and, like some other officers, it was his misfortune to behold his family taking opposite sides in the rising conflict. A portion of them were avowed secessionists. One of his sons became an officer in the rebel service; one

followed the fortunes of his father and his flag. My position in regard to him was for a time one of painful responsibility. To wound the sensibilities of an honorable, sensitive, and patriotic officer, by depriving him of his command on mere suspicion, would be keenly felt by him as cruel and unjust, and cause dissatisfaction on the part of good men who knew and had confidence in him; yet to retain him, when his fidelity was doubted, in a high and trusty post in such a crisis, might, if circumstances were adverse, subject the Government, and especially myself, to censure. Embarrassments such as these, when the country was in a shattered condition, and the political organizations of the nation were crumbling to pieces, were abundant and hard to be met. Justice to Captain Adams, a correct officer, who had great professional pride and patriotic instincts, whatever were his political or party sympathies, and however he may have hesitated in this instance, requires it to be stated that he faithfully performed his duty. He strictly obeyed the orders sent him, and by his activity and efforts contributed to the safety of Fort Pickens, when, had he been unfaithful, the place might have been lost.

Lieutenant Washington Gwathmey, the special messenger to whom Captain Adams intrusted his important confidential despatches, was a Virginian, deeply imbued with the false theories that were prevalent at the South. He conceived that his obligations to his State were paramount to those he owed his country. Although wearing the uniform, holding the commission, and receiving pay of the Federal Government, he believed it to be his duty to obey a factious party then in the ascendant in Virginia, rather than the legally constituted authorities and laws of the United States. But these false and erroneous opinions did not prevent him from faithfully discharging the trust confided to him by Captain Adams. Virginia had not then attempted to throw off her Federal obligation. Leaving Pensacola, he travelled night and day, and passing through Richmond, where he belonged, without stopping, he reached Washington on the afternoon of the 6th of April. Without going to his hotel, he came immediately to the Navy Department and relieved himself of his message, as

stated. A few days later this officer tendered his resignation, which, however, was not accepted. He was dismissed, and soon after entered the rebel service.

I went with the despatch of Captain Adams at once to the President. The information received was extremely embarrassing, for we were at the time actively engaged, and had been for some days, in fitting out an expedition to relieve Fort Sumter. That movement could not be delayed; but should the rebels become aware of it, they, having possession of the telegraph and every facility for communication, would be likely to attack Pickens before the garrison could be reinforced. It was determined that a special messenger, with positive orders, should be forthwith sent overland, through the insurrectionary region, to Pensacola, directing that the troops should be disembarked without delay. Promptness and despatch were necessary. The expedition destined for the relief of Sumter was to sail that day. The hesitancy of Captain Adams, whose justification was the truce referred to, endangered the safety of the fortress and the possession of Santa Rosa Island; for the rebels were in considerable force at Pensacola, and a knowledge of the fact that the Sumter expedition had sailed would be likely to precipitate an immediate assault on the little garrison under Lieutenant Slemmer in Pickens. Without waiting the result of inquiries immediately instituted in regard to the alleged truce or agreement, my first duty was to find a reliable messenger to proceed by the earliest conveyance to Pensacola. It was then past three o'clock, and the boat which conveyed the mail South left at seven o'clock that evening. I sent for Paymaster Henry Etting, then in Washington, in whom I had confidence, to perform this duty. Although not well, he promptly prepared to obey orders, but with an understanding, under the circumstances, that another officer should be substituted, if one of unquestioned fidelity and energy could be found in season. Before five he informed me that Lieutenant John L. Worden had just arrived in Washington, for whom he could vouch; and such inquiries as I could make of others satisfied me he was perfectly reliable. I directed that Lieutenant Worden should immediately report to me; and in a brief interview he was informed of my purpose to send him on a secret, responsible, and

perhaps dangerous mission through the South, and that he must leave within two hours for Pensacola. He expressed his readiness to obey orders, and although the time was short, and he indifferently prepared, he assured me he would be ready to leave at the time specified. I directed him to make no mention of his orders or his journey to any one, but to call upon me as soon as he could get ready. In the mean time I prepared the document that was to be confided to him. The fact that he was a naval officer, passing through the South—not a secessionist, nor in sympathy with secessionists—might cause him to be challenged, and perhaps searched. I therefore made the order to Captain Adams brief. It was as follows:

[Confidential.]

NAVY DEPARTMENT, April 6, 1861.

Captain HENRY A. ADAMS,
commanding naval forces off Pensacola.

Sir:

Your despatch of April 1st is received. The Department regrets that you did not comply with the request of Captain Vogdes, to carry into effect the orders of General Scott, sent out by the Crusader, under the orders of this Department.

You will, immediately on the first favorable opportunity after the receipt of this order, afford every facility to Captain Vogdes, by boats and other means, to enable him to land the troops under his command, it being the wish and intention of the Navy Department to coöperate with the War Department in that object.

I am, sir, respectfully, etc.,

GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.

This order, which I read to Lieutenant Worden when he called, and gave into his hands unsealed, he committed to memory before he reached Richmond, and then destroyed the writing. Hurrying on with all possible expedition, he contrived to elude detection, and arrived in Pensacola on the 11th. Here he had an interview with General Bragg, the rebel commander,

to whom he stated he had a verbal communication from Secretary Welles to Captain Adams, and received a pass to visit that officer. He was put on board the Sabine on the 12th of April, and communicated my orders to Captain Adams, who promptly obeyed them. That night the boats of the squadron, under the command of Lieutenant Albert N. Smith, successfully landed the artillery company of Captain Vogdes, consisting of 86 men and a detachment of 115 marines. The garrison in Fort Pickens, which was previously composed of only 83 men, was reinforced, and for the time made secure. The success of this movement was satisfactory, and of immense importance. It saved to the Government this important fortress on the Gulf of Mexico, and that at a critical moment which the delay of a single day would have imperilled. The expedition for the relief of Fort Sumter sailed on the night that Lieutenant Worden left Washington for Pensacola, and President Lincoln had decided that he would, when the squadron sailed, notify the authorities at Charleston of his intention to provision the fort in their harbor peaceably, or, if resisted, by force. The messenger with this communication to the Charleston authorities left, if I mistake not, by the same conveyance with Lieutenant Worden. Neither of them knew of the mission of the other. On the 8th the Governor of South Carolina was informed of the President's intention to send supplies to Sumter. When this information was given, Lieutenant Worden was pressing forward with all speed, but a vast distance was to be overcome before he could reach Pensacola.

General Beauregard, in command at Charleston, as soon as advised that the President had ordered an expedition to Sumter, telegraphed the fact to the Confederate Government at Montgomery. Davis and his associates in the Confederate Government were not wholly unprepared for the tidings received. They had been apprised that extraordinary naval and military movements were being made in New York, and when advised by Beauregard of President Lincoln's notice to the Charleston authorities, they concluded that the truce with Buchanan was cancelled, and determined to anticipate the action of the Federal Government by a simultaneous assault on both Sumter and Pickens, in the full confidence that the surprise upon the feeble garrisons in those

forts would cause both to fall. The result was, after an interchange of messages, and a demand and refusal of Major Anderson to surrender, that the bombardment of Sumter commenced on the morning of the 12th, the very day on which Pickens was reinforced. General Bragg was to have made an attack upon Pickens the night succeeding that on which reinforcements were thrown into the fort from the squadron; but the additional strength to the garrison defeated the project.

Lieutenant Worden, instead of remaining with the squadron and waiting an opportunity to come North by water, commenced his return journey by land on the 12th, immediately after delivering his message. General Bragg and the rebels at Pensacola, when they learned that the troops on the Richmond and Sabine had been landed, and the garrison in Pickens reinforced, felt themselves too weak to persevere in the proposed assault. Nor were they slow in coming to the conclusion that the messenger who had arrived and departed so suddenly was an agent of the Government, who had been instrumental in this movement. Mortified and chagrined that their intentions had been anticipated and defeated, they at once telegraphed to the Confederate Government a description of Lieutenant Worden, and on the morning of the 13th of April, when within five miles of Montgomery, Alabama, five officers of the rebel army entered the car and arrested him. The ground assigned for the arrest was that he had violated a pledge given to General Bragg, and that he had been instrumental in the disembarkation of troops, whereby Fort Pickens had been strengthened, contrary to an agreement or understanding with Captain Adams. Lieutenant W. had given no pledge, and the agreement alluded to, instead of having been made by Captain Adams, was an unwritten, *quasi* armistice or truce, mentioned in a communication of Secretaries Holt and Toucey, on the 29th of January, addressed to the naval officers off Pensacola, and Lieutenant Slemmer in command at Fort Pickens. This agreement had been consummated through the agency of Captain Samuel Barron, who went from Washington to Florida for that purpose. Captain Adams, in his despatch to me, makes mention of his having had interviews with General Bragg, and of the assurances of that gentleman that the con-

ditions of the agreement should be observed; but neither then, nor at any time, did he enter into any agreement, nor was he authorized to make one. But Bragg was censured for remissness in giving a pass to the messenger from the Navy Department to visit the squadron. It had defeated the rebel scheme to obtain possession of the fort, and the indignation was severe against Lieutenant Worden, who was detained for seven months a prisoner at Montgomery. Not until the 13th of November, just seven months from the day of his arrest, was he released from captivity. He was then sent to Richmond and exchanged for Lieutenant Sharp, a rebel officer who was captured at Hatteras Inlet, and in whose behalf the rebel authorities took special interest. Soon after his release Lieutenant Worden was appointed to the command of the iron-clad steamer Monitor, the first vessel of her class ever put afloat, and his voyage to Hampton Roads and encounter with the Merrimack are matters of historic record and interest.

The paper or document of Secretaries Holt and Toucey is the only written recognition of the truce or agreement entered into with the rebels which I remember to have seen, and of the existence of this document I am not aware that any member of Mr. Lincoln's Administration was informed when orders were sent to reinforce Pickens. I never saw it nor knew of it until after the receipt of Captain Adams's letter of the 1st of April. It has been asserted, and denied, that the Administration of Mr. Buchanan established an armistice, or entered into an arrangement with the rebels by which the functions of the Government to suppress insurrection and rebellion were suspended. Captain Adams states the light in which he and General Bragg viewed the communication of Messrs. Holt and Toucey, which I here insert:

WASHINGTON, January 29, 1861—Received at Pensacola,
January 29, 1861, at 9 P.M.

To Captain JAMES GLYNN, commanding the Macedonian;
Captain W. S. WALKER, commanding the Brooklyn, or
other naval officers in command; and Lieutenant ADAM J.
SLEMMER, First regiment Artillery, U. S. A., commanding
Fort Pickens.

In consequence of the assurances received from Mr. Mallory, in a telegram of yesterday to Messrs. Bigler, Hunter, and Slidell, with a request that it should be laid before the President, that Fort Pickens would not be assaulted, and an offer of such an assurance to the same effect from Colonel Chase, for the purpose of avoiding a hostile collision, upon receiving satisfactory assurances from Mr. Mallory and Colonel Chase that Fort Pickens will not be attacked, you are instructed not to land the company on board the Brooklyn, unless said fort shall be attacked or preparations shall be made for its attack. The provisions necessary for the supply of the fort you will land. The Brooklyn and the other vessels of war on the station will remain, and you will exercise the utmost vigilance, and be prepared at a moment's warning to land the company at Fort Pickens, and you and they will instantly repel any attack on the fort.

The President yesterday sent a special message to Congress, commending the Virginia resolutions of compromise. The commissioners of different States are to meet here on Monday, the 4th of February, and it is important that during their session a collision of arms should be avoided, unless an attack should be made or there should be preparations for such an attack. In either event the Brooklyn and the other vessels will act promptly. Your right and that of the other officers in command at Pensacola freely to communicate with the Government by special messenger, and its right, in the same manner, to communicate with yourselves and them, will remain intact, as the basis of the present instructions.

J. HOLT, Secretary of War.

I. TOUCEY, Secretary of the Navy.

The construction which Captain Adams put upon what he calls the "engagement made by Mr. Mallory and Colonel Chase with the United States Government," and which restrained him for weeks from landing troops, will be seen by the following extract from a letter written by him under date of the 18th of March, and sent by Lieutenant Gwathmey:

The officers and men, as I mentioned in my letter of February 19, are kept in readiness to land at the shortest no-

tice; but I have received the assurances of General Bragg, who commands the troops on shore, that he will respect the engagement made by Mr. Mallory and Colonel Chase with the United States Government, and will make no disposition for the attack of Fort Pickens. This engagement, you are aware, binds us not to reinforce Fort Pickens unless it is attacked or threatened. I could easily have thrown any number of men in it almost any time within the last four weeks.

This communication, written on the 18th of March, Captain Adams would not trust to the mails, but withheld for other conveyance; opportunities, however, were rare, and hence the delay in its reception.

Such was the first reinforcement of Fort Pickens. The garrison, which, under Lieutenant Slemmer, consisted of only 83 men, was increased to 284 on the 12th of April by a company of artillery and a battalion of marines. Additional troops and abundant supplies arrived a few days later under the command of Colonel (now Brevet Major-General) Harvey Brown; but Pickens would probably have passed into rebel hands ere the last expedition reached Pensacola had not the timely mission of Lieutenant (now Commodore) Worden caused the reinforcement from the squadron on the 12th of April.

The second reinforcement of Pickens was by a secret irregular military expedition initiated under the auspices of the Secretary of State, without the knowledge of the Secretary of War. By law and usage the duty of fitting out such a military expedition devolved on the Secretary of War; but in this instance that functionary was, for some unexplained cause, studiously excluded from all participation in or knowledge of the important movement which was carried forward within the Department of which he was chief and from the appropriations with which he was intrusted. There was doubtless a reason or purpose for this extraordinary proceeding, and also why the Secretary of State withheld from every member of the Cabinet all knowledge of the transaction. It may have been an exhibition of great executive and administrative skill and ability on the part of the Secretary of State; it may have demonstrated that if the Secretary of

the Treasury could, through the instrumentality of an officer of the army and an officer of the navy attached to the Treasury Department, prompt military movements, the Secretary of State could also institute by means of an army and naval officer a still more formidable expedition; or there may have been other reasons and influences for a step that has no parallel. It is without precedent and without imitation. The President himself had only indefinite general information that such a project was maturing. General Meigs, who was the special confidant of the Secretary of State, selected by him to plan the expedition, says it "originated with Mr. Seward." The first intimation which I received of this irregular proceeding, I obtained at midnight on the 6th of April, when endeavoring to clear up the confusion and difficulty occasioned by conflicting orders. I then learned to my astonishment of this secret enterprise, and that the steamer Powhatan, the flag-ship of an expedition which was ordered to relieve Fort Sumter, had been surreptitiously withdrawn from that duty, and that her legitimate commander, Captain Mercer, was deprived of his ship, which was transferred to Lieutenant D. D. Porter, who was to proceed with her to Pensacola. A large portion of the home squadron was at the time lying off that harbor with troops which had not been landed. Additional supplies and men from the army were appropriate, for they would be wanted; but there was no necessity for the Powhatan to be added to the squadron in the Gulf. She was indispensable for the Sumter expedition. The President, so soon as he understood the condition of things, ordered the restoration of the Powhatan to Captain Mercer, and that there should be no interference with or interruption of measures taken in regard to Sumter. His orders, however, were not effective. A brief telegram of Mr. Seward to Lieutenant Porter was disregarded by that officer, who hastened his departure to Pensacola, carrying off the boats, supplies, and men which had been prepared and were destined for the relief of Sumter. The result proved that while the supplies were opportune, there was no reason why the Secretary of State should have taken upon himself the duties of another Department, or why the Secretary of War, whose duty it was to furnish the supplies, should have been kept in ignorance of the enter-

prise, or not have ordered the expedition. The mission of the Powhatan was ill-conceived and ill-advised. The purpose for which she was taken was a total failure. She accomplished no one thing specified as an object, intent, or excuse for sending her to Pensacola. She did not arrive off the harbor until five days after Pickens had been reinforced by Vogdes and the marines. The transport *Atlantic*, having Colonel Brown on board, with troops and supplies, reached her destination on the 16th of April; the Powhatan did not arrive until the 17th. Colonel Brown, without awaiting the arrival of Lieutenant Porter and the Powhatan, was, with his force, promptly landed by the boats of Captains Adams and Poor, and the fort was again relieved and reinforced before Lieutenant Porter made his appearance on the 17th with the Powhatan, having on board the launches and men destined for Sumter.

The detachment of this vessel from the squadron to which she had been ordered without the knowledge of any one connected with the Navy Department, led to no little confusion and was the cause of very serious embarrassment. She was the most important of the few vessels in commission in all our Atlantic ports at that period; but the Government was by these surreptitious and irregular proceedings deprived of her services at Charleston and at Norfolk at a critical juncture. General Meigs, who was the special confidant of the Secretary of State in this matter, and was taken by him to the President as a counsellor and adviser, when his Cabinet associates were treated as not trustworthy, has written two communications on the subject. It appears to him, he says, that it was "within the prerogative of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy" to take such a vessel and designate its commander; and the whole irregular expedition in which he so actively participated seems in his view proper. Had the Secretary of War by any connivance secretly negotiated a treaty with a foreign power without the knowledge of the Secretary of State, or of any member of the Cabinet, aided by a district attorney and a consul to advise the President, General Meigs might have defended such negotiation also, and said, as he now does, that it was within the prerogative of the Chief Magistrate. He forgets, however, that the President, so soon as

he learned the facts in the case of the Powhatan, claimed no such prerogative, but directed the Secretary of State to order the immediate restoration of that vessel to her legitimate commander and to her designated duty. The President never intended to interfere with and secretly countermand the orders of one of the Departments, and he promptly directed a correction of the proceeding which the Quartermaster-General tries to defend.

It has not been my purpose, in bringing to light certain truths connected with the destruction of the Norfolk Navy-yard, and the expeditions to Sumter and to Pickens at the commencement of the war, to make charges or prefer accusations against any one, nor to criticise the military plans and operations in those cases. Statements of facts may in some instances be considered unpleasant disclosures, but they are not to be classed as charges and accusations. Truth in these matters should no longer be suppressed or perverted; and if in any respect I am in error, I shall be glad to be corrected. There are records and living witnesses to sustain or controvert my statements.

General Meigs, at that time a Captain of Engineers, planned the military part of the irregular expedition to Pensacola which Colonel (since Brevet-Major General) Harvey Brown was assigned to command. In the two letters which he has published on the subject of the relief of Fort Pickens, General Meigs wholly ignores the reinforcement from the squadron on the 12th of April, four days before he or any connected with that expedition arrived in sight of the "sand-hills of Pensacola," and five days before the Powhatan reached that station. Although confessedly uninformed on many points with which his advice and movements interfered, and to that extent perhaps excusable, he could not have been ignorant of the fact that Vogdes's company of artillery and the marines from the navy had been thrown into the the fort, and the garrison reinforced, before his arrival. He makes no allusion to it, however, but takes to himself and the Secretary of State the exclusive and entire credit of first reinforcing Fort Pickens.

The following extracts are from the first statement or narrative of General Meigs:

WASHINGTON, Thursday, Sept. 14, 1865.

My first interview with the President and the Secretary of State in relation to the matter was on the evening of the 29th of March. The President did not inform me that he intended to relieve Fort Sumter, but questioned me as to the possibility of doing it. I advised him in general terms that I could find him plenty of officers of the navy willing to try it. He then asked me whether I thought Fort Pickens could be reinforced. I replied that it could be, provided the relieving force reached there before it fell, and with the maps before us the mode of effecting this object was discussed. I advised that if the attempt was made, a fleet steamer under a young and enterprising officer should be despatched immediately to run the batteries, enter the harbor, and prevent any expedition of Bragg's crossing the harbor in boats to assault Fort Pickens. The President said he would see me again, if he concluded to go further in the matter.

I myself suggested to the President the name of the Powhatan and of her commander, and prepared the orders in relation to the movement for his signature; and this I did on the 31st of March or 1st of April, three or four days before the Sumter expedition was resolved upon.

In conclusion, permit me to remark that this, the first successful military expedition of the war, originated with Mr. Seward. Until it sailed, the United States had declined everywhere. Fortresses and harbors had been lost. He carried me to the President, merely saying that he thought the President ought to see some of the younger officers, and not consult only with men who, if war broke out, could not mount a horse.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

M. C. MEIGS, Brevet Major-General,
late Captain of Engineers.

Of the expediency and the necessity of early additional troops and supplies for Fort Pickens, over and above those which were landed from the squadron on the 12th of April, under the orders which the Secretary of the Navy sent out by Lieutenant Worden, there is no question. The rebels, checked from their first intended attack by that timely reinforcement, began soon after to assemble additional troops for a more formidable assault. Colonel Brown arrived on the 16th with this increased force. Promptly on his arrival he landed his troops, and at once set aside the advice which Captain Meigs had given the President, "with the maps" before them, that "a fleet steamer under a young and enterprising officer should run the batteries, enter the harbor," etc. The steamer was wanted for no such purpose. Lieutenant Porter had been given Captain Mercer's vessel to run the batteries; but this "young and enterprising officer" never ran them. The Powhatan was, by Captain Meigs's plan and advice to the President, to have entered the harbor of Pensacola; but she never entered it nor attempted to enter it. So that the secret interference with naval arrangements, and the orders of the Government by which the Sumter expedition was deprived of its flag-ship, accomplished no other end than to render that expedition abortive without effecting the alleged purpose for which she was sent to Pickens.

The best comment on the plan and advice of Captain Meigs will be found in the following extracts from a communication of Brevet Major-General Brown in 1867:

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The troops on board the Atlantic arrived off Pensacola on the evening of the 16th of April. The Powhatan did not arrive until about noon of the 17th. The commanding officer and a portion of his command were landed by the boats of Captains Adams and Poor immediately after their arrival, and the fort was relieved about two o'clock on the morning of the 17th, several hours before Captain Porter made his appearance. General Meigs did intercept Porter and did prevent his entering, but not because he wished him to cover the landing, for all the infantry and a part of the horses of the battery were landed before Porter's arrival,

by the zealous coöperation and able assistance of Captains Adams and Poor, who commanded the ships of war there.

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Now, I frankly assert that Captain Porter could not have entered Pensacola harbor at that time; that the attempt would have been followed by the certain destruction of the vessel, the probable loss of the crew, and the jeopardizing the safety of Fort Pickens; and that if he could have entered, no valuable results would have followed. He would only have entered into a trap in which he could not stay, and from which he could not extricate himself or be extricated.

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Captain Porter remained at anchor off the fort for several weeks, and had full opportunity and facility for ascertaining the correctness of my statement of its condition and wants. He did *not* enter or make any attempt to enter the harbor, and never afterwards communicated to me a desire or purpose to do so.

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HARVEY BROWN, Brevet Major-General U. S. A.

These extracts, and the course pursued by General Brown in his defence of Pickens, demonstrate the value of the naval part in the plan, and of the advice given by the engineer whom the Secretary of State "carried to the President," with the remark that "he ought to see some of the younger officers, and not consult only with men who, if war broke out, could not mount a horse."

In advising that the Powhatan should be taken from the control of the Navy Department, General Meigs pleads ignorance of her legitimate orders. It is his justification. For the ill-advised and abandoned project of running the batteries, perhaps the same plea should be interposed. He did not then know that it was, as General Brown demonstrates, an impossibility. In his two studied communications, he makes no mention of the entire failure of the naval part of the plan which he so unfortunately advised. It has been, and is, my object to make public facts in

relation to certain transactions which have been but imperfectly understood, no matter who is affected. Whether it was I or others who extracted from the President orders in relation to a naval vessel which I had in the performance of my duty put in commission, of which I had charge, and her record in my keeping; whether I or others deceived the President, intrigued to defeat the Sumter expedition, are matters of which men will form a correct judgment when in possession of the facts, which have been hitherto perverted or suppressed. No right-minded person will construe the publication of truth into an accusation against any one.

There is no denying the fact that an important vessel was at a critical period surreptitiously withdrawn from her destination and deprived of her legitimate commander by an order extracted from the President. That the President was deceived in this matter by some one, unintentionally or otherwise, there is no doubt; for as soon as he was made acquainted with the true state of the case he countermanded the order which had been extracted from him, and directed the restoration of the vessel to Mercer. Now who extracted the order, who deceived the President, and what was the object, are matters in issue on which the Quartermaster-General volunteers an opinion, pronounces a judgment, and makes accusations. I merely give the facts and, so far as I know them, the actors.

The Powhatan, instead of going to Charleston and then returning North, as was ordered, where, in the then feeble condition of the navy, she could have rendered valuable service, especially at Norfolk, was diverted to a quarter where she was not needed. Without the knowledge of the Secretary of the Navy and against the final express order of the President, she was sent on a useless mission, ostensibly to perform a service that she did not and could not execute. In this there was error, irregularity—perhaps worse—on the part of some one or more. I for years, in the then condition of affairs, bore the blame and responsibility of these errors and failures, for which others, whose secret operations defeated my measures, were justly accountable. A faithful exposition, now that the condition of the country is changed, is excepted to by one of the principal actors.

In neither of his publications does General Meigs attempt any explanation of the unwarrantable and inexcusable attempt to thrust Captain Barron, a well-known secessionist, into the Navy Department, and into intimate and confidential relations with the head of that Department without consulting him. General Meigs declares that "the overt act of interference with the navy most complained of" is the matter of the Powhatan. This is a serious mistake. Highly improper as was that interference, it is vastly less exceptionable and reprehensible than the executive order to create a new naval bureau and make Barron chief, which was at the same time and by the same parties extracted from the President. Was Captain Meigs, in whose handwriting this mysterious order first appeared detailing Barron for Department duty, the author of this intrigue? Was Lieutenant D. D. Porter, who wrote the remarkable postscript to that remarkable order directing the Secretary of the Navy to establish a new bureau and do other illegal acts, guilty of that impropriety, disrespect, and interference with his superior? Or was there some one else who attempted thus to interfere with the organization of the Navy Department, and to place a rebel captain in a position for "detailing all officers for duty," whereby the most important commands could be given to rebels; "supervising charges made against officers," which would enable rebel officers to escape conviction and punishment? This interference with the organization and administration of the Navy Department was attempted by some one. General Meigs would brush it over; says he has "no distinct recollection" of this order and postscript, which was published in *THE GALAXY* for November; that "of details within the Navy Department, such as are referred to in the postscript in regard to Captain Barron, *he* had no knowledge, and upon them could not have given advice." Nevertheless, this strange document—an executive order, creating without authority of law a new bureau in the Navy Department; placing a rebel captain in charge of its operations, empowering him to detail all officers for duty, to supervise charges made against officers, etc., was written by himself and Lieutenant Porter—a joint labor and a divided responsibility. Whether they originated the measure or were the mere instruments of others, has never

been disclosed. Until recently this mysterious transaction was not made public. The order, with others, was extracted from the President, who reposed confidence in those who submitted at the same time a multitude of orders and matters in detail for his signature; but this one was promptly disavowed and annulled by him when he knew its character and purport. Some person originated this scheme to change the organization of the Navy Department. It was done by the same parties who extracted the order in relation to the Powhatan, was done at the same time and place, was in the handwriting of two of them, and reached me under the same envelope with other documents of that date. But who was the author?

For the part taken by General, at that time Captain Meigs in these transactions he should not perhaps in all respects be held to a strict accountability. He was acting under orders, was uninformed in regard to measures of Administration that were then in progress of fulfilment, and the order which he wrote and the President signed was evidently penned under dictation. Of that part which related to the assignment of Captain Stringham, he says he has "no distinct recollection," and he of course knew nothing of "the complications at Vera Cruz," to which he alludes. When in his recent letter he says his "recommendation to the President originated in a desire to break the toils in which by such a convention a former Administration involved the squadron at Pensacola and Fort Pickens," he forgets that his recommendation was on the 29th of March or 1st of April, and that neither the President nor any member of the Cabinet knew of any "toils which involved the squadron at Pensacola" until the arrival of Lieutenant Gwathmey, on the 6th of April, with despatches from Captain Adams. It was never doubted by the President or the members of the Administration, nor by General Scott, that the order of the latter to Captain Vogdes, on the 12th of March, to land his command, was carried into effect, and that Pickens was to that extent reinforced, until a week after Captain Meigs had made his recommendation and given his advice for a steamer to run the batteries of McRae and Barrancas.

The position of Lieutenant Porter when off Pensacola was doubtless awkward and embarrassing. He had special instruc-

tions, written by an engineer, under the direction of the Secretary of State, to perform a duty which it was impossible for him to execute. Having an independent command, his vessel was not legitimately on the station. The senior officer had no instructions in relation to him or the Powhatan, did not recognize him or receive his reports, or forward them to the Department. He was not in communication with the Secretary of the Navy, whose orders he had broken, taken from under his control a vessel which had been duly commissioned, and displaced her commander, who was his superior. His orders were explicit to enter the harbor. That alone was the purpose for which he had been detailed, but that service he could not render. He, therefore, was lying off Pensacola, but was not one of the squadron. He had no authority to go or remain. He was isolated, disconnected with the Navy Department and the naval service. In this dilemma he wrote letters to the Secretary of State, who knew not what to do with him or his letters, for naval records were not kept in the State Department; instructions to naval officers did not emanate from it, nor was the Secretary of State in a condition to send supplies to this independent command which he had caused to be created.

Feeling his embarrassment, the Secretary of State at length passed over to me Lieutenant Porter's letters and requested me to relieve them both from the difficulty in which they were involved. As the steamer and officer had been irregularly withdrawn from the custody and control of the Navy Department, I required she should be duly restored. This was done by the President's order, and on the 13th of May I sent instructions to Lieutenant that the Powhatan would, until other orders, constitute a part of the Gulf Blockading Squadron, and directed him to report to the senior officer off Pensacola.

There having been no report received in relation to this vessel for a number of weeks the Department ascertained from her log book the records of the dates and duty during the interim while she was away on the irregular and abortive pretext or project of running the batteries and entering the harbor of Pensacola.

In conclusion I may be permitted to say that in what I have

written I have endeavored to forbear the mere expression of opinion, but have not hesitated to state the truth in regard to men and measures, although in doing so I may in some instances have given offence to individuals with whom I have been intimate and for whom I have personal regard and friendship. The three papers which *THE GALAXY* has published in relation to events connected with Norfolk, Sumter, and Pickens have brought to light incidents, naval, military, and civil, which occurred in the month of April, 1861—a month pregnant with facts of unsurpassed interest in American history.

Admiral Farragut and New Orleans

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE ORIGIN AND
COMMAND OF THE FIRST THREE NAVAL
EXPEDITIONS OF THE WAR.

The capture of New Orleans by Admiral Farragut in 1862 was one of the Union's most spectacular victories. To counteract widely current impressions that the army under General Benjamin F. Butler had more to do with this success than the navy under Farragut, Welles wrote the following two articles. Emphasizing the leading role of the navy in all amphibious operations up to 1862, he discusses the details of the planning and preparations for the assault on the Crescent City. The accuracy of his version is generally acknowledged today.

PART ONE

THE REBELLION which commenced in the spring of 1861, though long threatened, found the country almost wholly unprepared for the conflict. Few in the Free States could be made to believe there would be an appeal to arms for the alleged or real grievances of which certain impassioned leaders complained. There had been severe party strife for years, threats to nullify or resist Federal laws, which gradually assumed a sectional character; but the real differences or causes of difference were not such as to lead necessarily to hostilities, had not war or the subversion of the Government been the design of some of the ambitious and trusted men in high official position.

But while almost the whole of the people of the Northern States were disbelievers in any civil war, a very different con-

The Galaxy, XII (November, 1871).

dition of things existed at the South. There the apprehensions were serious and almost universal that a fierce struggle was to take place. A majority of the people in nearly every State were opposed to armed resistance to the Government, and opposed to any scheme for dissolving the Union. Yet they had been persuaded, and actually believed, that they were greatly wronged and oppressed by Federal legislation. But their opposition to violent measures was tame and negative from the very fact that there was no substantial cause for complaint, while the decisive element was mischievous, positive, energetic, and belligerent. The secession or disunion party had by activity and vigilance obtained possession of the State governments through the South in 1860, and made extensive preparations to resist the General Government.

The election of Abraham Lincoln, brought about by the secession leaders who had deliberately and designedly broken up the Democratic organization, was made the pretext for seceding from the Union. As soon as the result of the election in 1860 was known, before any action had been taken, and while the Democratic party had the President and a majority of Congress, the State of South Carolina took instant measures for dissolving her connection with the Federal Government. This extraordinary and revolutionary movement, unprovoked and uncalled for by any serious grievance or aggressive action of the Federal Government, was followed by other States. Members of Congress with dramatic ostentation and parade resigned their seats and left Washington. Scenes similar to those, but not carried to so great length, had previously occurred, and the Administration and others from the North appear to have viewed these proceedings, now as then, as an excess of party bitterness which would exhaust itself in words. No effective measures were taken to counteract them and strengthen the Government.

When, therefore, Congress adjourned and the change of administration took place on the 4th of March, 1861, the new incumbents found the Government wholly unprepared by any extra-legislative authority or preparation to maintain itself against the formidable combination that had so long been maturing schemes for its destruction. The Navy Department

was perhaps in the most feeble and deplorable condition of any branch of the Government for the emergency—without vessels, or armament, or men, and without legal authority to increase or strengthen either.

A blockade of three thousand five hundred miles in length, greater in extent than the whole coast of Europe from Cape Trafalgar to Cape North, was ordered in April; and as we had not vessels, guns, or men for such a work, a navy had to be improvised to enforce it. Ships in the merchant service which could be made available were forthwith procured, guns were manufactured, men were enlisted, and the whole resources of the country were put in immediate requisition to meet the crisis. But although the energies and abilities of the nation were taxed and called out with wonderful and unexampled rapidity, they did not satisfy the impatience of the people, who had been taught, and were willing to believe, the rebellion could be suppressed and peace be restored in ninety days.

The Government discharged as it best could with the limited means at its disposal the new and extraordinary duties which, in addition to ordinary current affairs, devolved upon it. The change of administration involved in some respects a change of policy and of men in the civil service. The President and Cabinet were inexperienced in their new positions, and entitled to encouragement and support even had the times been propitious. Coming from old opposing parties, their political principles were not in all respects homogeneous. Little time was given them, however, for concert and concentration before war—intestine war, the worst and most to be deplored of all conflicts—was precipitated upon the country.

The first call for seventy-five thousand men to serve for three months seems, since the experience we have had through four eventful years with a million of men under arms, to have been insignificant in numbers and ridiculous in time for the suppression of that formidable rebellion, which shook the continent, shattered the framework of the Government, and taxed the energies of the nation; but without any previous preparation the call embraced as many as the country could readily arm, equip, supply, and organize; and few then believed we were to have a

protracted war. Little, comparatively, was attempted, and but little was accomplished at the beginning. The rebels, having resistance in view, were better prepared than the Government for the conflict. Reverses to the Union cause followed, with murmurs and general dissatisfaction because the Administration was apparently so dilatory and inefficient in its movements, and because our undisciplined troops were not invincible and irresistible.

Time was necessary to equip our few naval vessels; to procure and to prepare the purchased and chartered steamers for naval service; to recall our foreign squadrons; to manufacture ordnance, to get supplies, and to enlist seamen. No allowance was made for these things by the inconsiderate and unthinking, who, under the impression that vessels were ready and equipped, and crews enlisted and trained, were loud in their complaints of the inefficiency of the navy and the Navy Department. But those who were intelligent and informed on the subject, instead of complaining, were amazed that so much in so brief a period was accomplished. The rebels felt and acknowledged it. A joint Committee of the Confederate Congress, "appointed to investigate the administration of the Navy Department" of the insurgents, in their report apologizing for the disasters which had overwhelmed and annihilated their navy, dwell on the energy and power which they had encountered. They say: "The vast naval resources, great commercial school for seamen, numerous artisans, and vast workshops enabled him to augment this formidable force with a rapidity unequalled in naval history, while the naval resources of the world were open to him. It would have required many years, even under the most favorable circumstances, for us to have built and equipped as many and such vessels as the enemy began the war with."

Admiral Du Pont, writing from Port Royal July, 1862, said to a friend: "I do not hesitate to say that nothing has ever come up to the energy of the Navy Department in any country. The improvised navy for which Mr. Welles was so abused, and which in my judgment saved us a foreign war by preventing the blockade from being broken by the English and French, are among its great deeds."

While most persons anticipated a speedy suppression of the insurrection and the restoration of harmony and peace, the Secretary of the Navy came to a different conclusion. He saw that this was no mere impulsive outbreak. The retiring Administration, without being specially committed to the secession movement, had studiously abstained from the exercise of any authority to prevent or suppress it. It had placed no garrisons in the forts of the South, though the local authorities were organizing actively for armed resistance to Federal laws. Were the new Administration to attempt to send troops or supplies, which was anticipated and expected by the secessionists and their sympathizers, the movement would be denounced and resisted as just cause of offence. This was made manifest when the Administration in pursuance of its duty endeavored to send provisions to the small garrison in Sumter. That peaceful attempt of the Government to discharge its duty was made the pretext for an assault on the fortress and the flag.

While the retiring Federal Administration had done nothing toward maintaining the national authority in the insurrectionary region, the State governments which were in the hands and under the control of the secessionists had been able to organize powerful laws to obstruct and break down the Federal Union. Their proceedings had been deliberate, and so extensive and powerful, and Congress had left the Federal Government so wholly unprepared for the conflict, that the Secretary of the Navy was convinced the struggle would be severe, and that the duration of the war would extend far beyond the three months for which the troops had been ordered out. He took his measures accordingly. Without specific legal authority, he proceeded not only to buy and charter merchant steamers, but he assumed the responsibility of immediately ordering, without law and without appropriations, the construction of over thirty naval steamers, none of which could be completed within six months from the attack on Sumter and long after the terms of the 75,000 men had expired, which many supposed would close the insurrection. It is not necessary to speculate on what would have been said and done had the insurrection been suppressed within ninety days, with this large increase of our naval force and immense ex-

penditure. As it was, the first business movement on the first day of the extra session, before even the message of the President had been received stating the object for convening Congress, was the introduction of a resolution by the then Chairman of the Naval Committee of the Senate, inquiring by what authority and at what rates the Secretary of the Navy had increased his expenditures and made contracts and purchases for the navy.

At home and abroad the blockade was pronounced an impossibility; but the Navy Department put forth all its energies to establish and make it effective. There were soon employed in the various navy and private ship yards, foundries, and machine shops a force of not less than twenty thousand mechanics and workmen, exclusive of seamen enlisted in the service. As soon as a small force was placed before the principal ports to cut off traffic with the rebel States, the Navy Department commenced projecting expeditions on the coast. The first of these was for the capture of the batteries which the rebels had constructed at Hatteras Inlet, from which point they were sending out small marauding craft to capture vessels engaged in trade which approached the North Carolina coast. Preparations for the Hatteras expedition, an enterprise which originated in and was put in operation by the Navy Department, were begun in July. General Scott, who was consulted, and of whom military co-operation was asked, consented to spare troops from Fortress Monroe to accompany the expedition when the navy was ready, provided the detachment was not detained after the result, whatever that might be. On the 9th of August I wrote Flag Officer Stringham in relation to the Hatteras expedition, that "in order to take the batteries to which you allude, General Scott assures me he will authorize General Butler to detail a military force to accompany the expedition." When this assurance was given General B. F. Butler was in command at Fortress Monroe; but on the 13th of August, four days after, General Wool was ordered to relieve him, which he did on the 19th of August. The order which General Scott promised on the 9th to issue to General Butler was promptly given when required to General Wool, but still on condition and with an express understanding that the troops should return to Fortress Monroe, and not re-

main at the inlet to garrison the forts. General Butler, relieved by General Wool, sought and was assigned to command the 900 men that were detailed to accompany the navy, and embarked with Flag Officer Stringham in the *Minnesota*, which sailed from Hampton Roads on the 26th of August.

The success at Hatteras, the first naval expedition, and it may be said perhaps the first substantial victory of the war, was followed by the more important expedition to Port Royal under Admiral Du Pont. In this expedition the cooperating military force was commanded by General Thomas W. Sherman. Both of these expeditions originated in the Navy Department. They were quietly planned, and matured with a secrecy unknown to the military operations of that period. Hence probably the correspondents and writers of the day, who usually obtained their first information of events through the War Department or from army officers, misstated and gave erroneous accounts of these and other expeditions, and awarded not unfrequently credit to military officers which strictly belonged to naval commanders. Naval officers were invariably prohibited from giving information of naval movements for publication, and newspaper correspondents, always inquisitive and generally intelligent, were for this reason carefully excluded from the expeditions, and as far as possible from all knowledge in regard to naval operations. This rigid and restrictive policy of the navy was in such marked contrast to that of the military, where correspondents were generally welcomed and often furnished with every facility to obtain and publish army operations, was unsatisfactory, led to much misrepresentation of the Navy Department, and sometimes to gross injustice to the navy. Many of the perverted statements which had their origin in pique toward those who excluded, and favor toward those who received and encouraged them in their efforts to be the first to lay before the public news which all desired to know, but which it was impolitic and often injurious to publish, have gone into the histories which, hastily got up, were afterward without examination adopted as authentic. Nearly every one of these histories passes over the naval commander or represents him as a subordinate attached to a military enterprise. They speak, not of Flag Officer Stringham's expedi-

tion, but of "General Butler's expedition to Hatteras." Some of them assume that the expedition originated with and was achieved by him, when he merely went under orders with two battalions which were sent in compliance with a request made by the Navy Department for troops to assist Flag Officer Stringham, the naval commander, in a naval expedition of which he knew nothing until he received orders from General Scott directing him to aid and coöperate in a naval enterprise.

The preliminary arrangements for the expedition which resulted in the capture of Port Royal, a more important and more elaborate undertaking, were commenced really before those of Hatteras. As early as the 25th of June a board was convened in the Navy Department, composed of Captain, afterward Rear-Admiral S. F. Du Pont, Professor A. D. Bache, Chief of the Coast Survey, with whom the Secretary of War associated, by special request, Major, subsequently General J. G. Barnard of the Corps of Engineers. Later, Commander, now Rear-Admiral Charles H. Davis, who officiated as secretary, was added to this board.

The object and purpose of the Navy Department in convening this board, and the date when the expedition under Flag Officer Du Pont was first contemplated, will be best understood by publishing the original order, which was on the 25th of June, only two months after the proclamation of blockade had been issued and before it had been made absolutely efficient at all points:

[Confidential.]

NAVY DEPARTMENT, June 25, 1861.

Captain S. F. DU PONT and Prof. A. D. BACHE, Board, etc.

GENTLEMEN:

The Navy Department is desirous to condense all the information in the archives of the Government which may be considered useful to the blockading squadrons, and the Board are therefore requested to prepare such matter as in their judgment may seem necessary; first, extending from the Chesapeake to Key West; secondly, from Key West to the extreme southern point of Texas. It is imperative that two or more points should be taken possession of on the Atlantic coast, and Fernandina and Port Royal are spoken

of. Perhaps others will occur to the Board. All facts bearing upon such contemplated movement are desired at an early moment. Subsequently similar points in the Gulf of Mexico will be considered. It is also very desirable that the practicability of closing all the Southern ports by mechanical means should be fully discussed and reported upon.

Very respectfully, etc.,

GIDEON WELLES.

On the 18th of September a division of the Atlantic squadron took place. Captain Du Pont was appointed commander of the South Atlantic blockading squadron. On the 12th of October he received final orders, and sailed on the 29th.

In his final instructions, which were strictly confidential, Bull's Bay, St. Helena, Port Royal, and Fernandina were named as accessible and desirable points; but the preference of the Department for Port Royal was not put in writing, lest it might by some means become public and the rebels put on their guard. The views of the Department in favor of Port Royal were made known to Flag Officer Du Pont in conversation, but the opinions of that officer did not at first coincide with those of the Department. His choice was Bull's Bay, from an apprehension that Port Royal was too strongly fortified and that he could not get his flag-ship, the *Wabash*, over the bar. But he came into the measure at the last moment—having been finally persuaded, as he afterward admitted, by the Assistant Secretary, who visited New York for that purpose before he sailed; and he frankly said after the result, that to have gone to Bull's Bay, which was his design, would have been an error. The destination was, however, left indefinite in his orders, and his conclusions were not to be communicated to the commanders of the various vessels until they sailed, when the point of rendezvous was indicated in sealed orders, which were not to be opened until at sea. This uncertainty in regard to the final destination of the squadron prevented the enemy from concentrating a formidable force at Port Royal to resist the Union arms.

As usual with large expeditions, the departure of Du Pont's squadron was delayed, and it did not get off until the 29th of

October. As soon as the arrangements for that enterprise were completed, and before the squadron left Hampton Roads, the attention of the Department, previously occupied, was intently directed toward New Orleans, the most important place in every point of view in the insurrectionary region, and the most difficult to effectually blockade. The whole country, and especially the great Northwest, was interested in the free and uninterrupted navigation of the Mississippi, the ocean outlet of the immense central valley which contains within its slopes one-half the States and territory and is the very heart of the Union. New Orleans is the great depot for its products, and Forts Jackson and St. Philip, which protected it, were the gates that barred ocean communication with the city. To gain possession of the river and of the city was one of the first objects which addressed itself to the Administration after the war opened, and was imperatively demanded by the great States which were specially interested. The unity of the inhabitants and States of the valley under one government, and the unresisted communication of its people through the natural and national highway which belonged alike to those on the upper as well as the lower Mississippi, called out the combined energies of all. The Government sympathized with and responded to the demands that were made for the assertion and maintenance of this great national right without restriction or interruption.

Military plans had been projected from the beginning to obtain control of this national thoroughfare and the city near its mouth; but all of these schemes contemplated a combined army and navy movement which should descend from Cairo on the upper waters of the Mississippi. The idea of a naval conquest of New Orleans from the Gulf was not entertained by the army or the Administration. When, therefore, the Navy Department had perfected its arrangements for the Port Royal expedition and given final instructions to Flag Officer Du Pont, it began to consider the embarrassments and difficulty of blockading the Mississippi Delta, and the practicability of an effective demonstration in the Gulf. As early as the 31st of July the Department had proposed to Commodore Mervine, then in command of the blockading squadron in the Gulf, to establish and

hold a battery at or near the head of "the passes of the Mississippi," and he was authorized to take for that purpose naval guns that were at Tortugas, a large number having been borrowed by the War Department and sent out to Fort Pickens on the recommendation of Captain Meigs of the Engineers, but never used. These guns were left exposed on the beach at Tortugas.

The following is an extract from the communication of the Department referred to:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, July 31, 1861.

Flag Officer WM. MERVINE,
commanding Gulf Blockading Squadron.

SIR:

. . . . A large number of naval guns sent out to Fort Pickens have been landed at Tortugas. If you deem it practicable in your judgment to establish and hold a battery at or near the head of the passes of the Mississippi (and the subject is most earnestly pressed upon your immediate attention), you are authorized to take any number of these guns and construct such a battery. An engineer officer will probably be detailed by the senior army officer at your request, and laborers to assist might be hired at Key West. The necessity of taking measures to effectually close the river seems to leave no alternative but the construction of one or more batteries, and any expenditures to accomplish this will be approved by the Department. . .

Very respectfully, etc.,

GIDEON WELLES.

The capture of the forts and the city by a naval expedition from the Gulf was at that time entertained by no one, and an effective blockade of the numerous passes by naval vessels alone seemed impossible. One or more batteries above the delta was deemed the best, and perhaps the only effectual method of preventing communication. In the mean time the rebels had in July taken possession of and repaired the fortifications at Ship Island, ten or twelve miles off the coast, and some sixty miles from New Orleans, about equidistant from Mobile, and one

hundred miles from the mouth of the Mississippi. The strategic importance of this place was felt, and as soon as the Department became aware of the facts the following communication was addressed to Flag Officer Mervine:

[Confidential.]

NAVY DEPARTMENT, August 23, 1861.

Flag Officer WILLIAM MERVINE,
commanding Gulf Blockading Squadron.

SIR:

In your despatch No. — of the 22d July, you report that you intend to visit Ship Island.

It has been a matter of surprise and regret that you should have permitted so important a position as Ship Island to have been fortified and retained by the insurgents. At this distance it is difficult to understand the reasons for the apparent inactivity and indifference that have governed in this matter. If the force under your command is not all that we could wish, or all that we intend it shall be, still it is sufficient for some demonstration, and it would be well to make up in activity and extra exertion for the want of numbers.

You have large ships, heavy batteries, young and willing officers, with men sufficient to dispossess the insurgents from Ship Island. They might have been prevented entirely from intrenching themselves upon it. In order to have done this, smaller vessels would have been necessarily substituted to guard the passes. This, it would seem, might have been done.

I allude to these matters, not knowing what action you have taken in the premises since the 22d ult. There is great uneasiness in the public mind, as well as anxiety in the Department, on the apparent inactivity of our squadrons.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES.

The naval preparations made in consequence of these orders alarmed the rebels, who during their occupation of Ship Island had intrenched themselves and rebuilt the fort which had been previously destroyed.

Captain W. W. McKean relieved Flag Officer Mervine of the command of the Gulf squadron in September. The works on Ship Island were abandoned by the rebels with some precipitation soon after, and on the 17th of September Commander Melancton Smith of the steamer Massachusetts landed a force and took possession of the island. Our men proceeded to mount cannon, and strengthened the fort by a formidable armament of nine-inch Dahlgren guns and rifled cannon. Barracks were also erected from the materials which the rebels left on the island when they fled; and having in view at that early day an effective naval demonstration in that quarter, the island was held by the navy until troops could be sent to occupy it. The importance of retaining the island for naval operations was duly appreciated by the Government, and on representations from the Navy Department a military force of 2,500 men was promised for its occupation. This force was intended to relieve the seamen from confined shore duty and allow them more active service afloat. Some effort was required to effect this object, and circumstances favored the application.

General Butler had rendered important services early in the war at Annapolis and Baltimore. These services were as much of a civil as military character, and as such were valued by the Administration. The leading and educated army officers, while they recognized the ability of General Butler as a civil magistrate, municipal officer, or chief of police, did not admit that his education, training, genius, or capacity were military, or adapted to his military aspirations or the position assigned him. He had been relieved from command first at Baltimore and then at Fortress Monroe. But his brief administration at Baltimore and some of his acts and papers had made him popular in that stormy period. In order therefore that he might have command commensurate with his office and retain nominal military rank and position, he was early in the autumn, after he accompanied Flag Officer Stringham to Hatteras, sent to the New England States, which were made a distinct military department, to which he was assigned, with authority to raise by enlistment a force to serve on the coast wherever wanted. In raising these troops a difficulty had occurred between him and Governor Andrew of

Massachusetts, causing additional embarrassment to the Administration, from which it was felt all would be relieved were this restless officer sent to Ship Island or the far Southwest, where his energy, activity, and impulsive force might be employed in desultory aquatic and shore duty in concert with the navy. Many of the men to be enlisted by him would come from the seaboard, and a considerable portion of them were fishermen and mariners who could, it was said, perform such amphibious coast duty as might be needed at Ship Island, Beaufort, or elsewhere. As this duty would be chiefly that of seconding naval operations—acting in coöperation with and to a considerable extent under the direction of naval officers—it was thought a fortunate circumstance that such an opening presented itself for the employment of General Butler and the regiments he was raising in New England. He could, as the navy had obtained possession of Ship Island, be detailed with his command for duty at that station, and in due time elsewhere on the coast.

In a letter to Flag Officer McKean, then in command of the squadron in the Gulf, that officer was informed on the 2d of November of this promised military force, and directed to hold Ship Island until its arrival:

[Confidential.]

NAVY DEPARTMENT, November 2, 1861.

Flag Officer W. W. McKEAN,
commanding Gulf Blockading Squadron.

SIR:

. . . General Butler with 2,500 men will sail for Ship Island about the 20th November. You will therefore hold possession of that island, and, if practicable, move up the nine-inch guns from Tortugas. . . .

Very respectfully, etc.,

GIDEON WELLES.

The troops did not leave as soon as was promised, and on the 25th of November a further communication on the same subject was addressed to Flag Officer McKean, from which I make the following extract:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, November 25, 1861.

Flag Officer WILLIAM W. MCKEAN,
commanding Gulf Blockading Squadron, Key West, Florida.

SIR:

The Constitution sails in a few days with a force to take possession of Ship Island. You will, therefore, transfer to the senior officer in command of this force possession of all Government property not actually required by you for establishing a naval depot. You will coöperate with this officer in the protection of this position. . . .

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES.

The occupancy of Ship Island by the navy, and the procurement of 2,500 troops for the station, were preliminary to other and more extensive operations which the Government had in view in that quarter. Representations had been made that a strong Union feeling existed in Texas, which only needed the protection and encouragement of an armed Union force to be fully developed. A demonstration on the coast of Texas was consequently entertained. Mobile was, however, a more favored point with military men, in view of the combined army and navy movement which was organizing to descend from the North and obtain possession of the Mississippi river and ultimately of New Orleans. An effort in the direction of Mobile seemed a preferable military movement to Galveston or any part of Texas. But while the attention of others, when turned to the Southwest, was divided between Texas and Mobile, the Navy Department, on which devolved the duty of establishing an effective blockade of the coast and the interdiction of all traffic with New Orleans, felt the necessity of more efficient and decisive measures than the mere possession of outposts like Ship Island and the Mississippi Delta to accomplish the object. The difficulty of guarding and closing the passes of the Mississippi, and all water communication with New Orleans, which was as difficult as the blockade of Wilmington at a later period, the escape of the Sumter, the disaster to the naval vessels commanded by

Captain Pope and others, the knowledge that formidable iron-clad vessels were being rapidly constructed at New Orleans, the low alluvial banks of the river, on which the army was disinclined to attempt to plant and erect batteries and garrison them in that sickly swamp, were facts keenly felt; and it seemed that a vigorous blow at the centre by the capture of New Orleans itself would be less difficult, less expensive, less exhausting, would be attended with less loss of life and be a more fatal blow to the rebels, than the most extensive, stringent, and protracted blockade that could possibly be established. The army movements were tardy and indefinite, and, regardless of the navy and the blockade, they began to tend toward Mobile rather than New Orleans, as a better objective point for military operations. These uncertain and vacillating military schemes convinced the Navy Department that it could not rely on the army to aid in enforcing the blockade; that what was a primary object with the navy was a secondary one with the army. While, therefore, we continued to assist in the movement for descending the river, whatever might be its termination, we felt the necessity of projecting other and more effective and definite measures, having in view the capture of New Orleans and the possession of the lower Mississippi by a naval expedition, which should ascend from the Gulf. But it was not easy to convince others, and particularly military men, that such an enterprise was feasible. Little encouragement was received from any quarter. In general and desultory conversation with military and naval men and others, the passage of the forts and capture of New Orleans was spoken of as a desirable but not practicable naval undertaking. Yet it was noted and remembered by the Navy Department that our steamers had passed and repassed the batteries at Hatteras and Port Royal, had overcome them without serious injury to the vessels, and it was asked why could not the forts in the Mississippi be passed in like manner? There were, it is true, a narrow channel, a rapid, adverse current, and regularly constructed forts to be encountered, which might prove more formidable than the batteries at Hatteras and Hilton Head; but with steamships the propelling power of the vessel—now no longer dependent on wind and tide—was subject to the com-

mander, and with some loss of vessels, some sacrifice of life, it was believed the forts might be run. This was an occasion when it became necessary to take great risks to accomplish great results. What was early spoken of as a possibility—an event hoped for rather than attainable—gradually gained favor with the Navy Department, until the conclusion was reached that it was not only practicable, but the best step which could be taken for perfecting the blockade, getting possession of the river, and to aid in suppressing the rebellion. The Assistant Secretary, Mr. Fox, who had been familiar with the river while in the merchant service, was earnest and unequivocal for a purely naval attack, and was confident the passage of the forts might be effected without military assistance. When, therefore, intelligence of the capture of the forts at Port Royal was received and the manner in which it had been effected—the squadron under Du Pont, like that under Stringham, having passed and repassed the batteries, Du Pont's in a circle, thus incurring double risk, without material injury to the vessels or serious loss of life—the views of the Navy Department in regard to the passage of Forts Jackson and St. Philip and the capture of New Orleans, hitherto speculative and uncertain, were confirmed, and measures for its accomplishment were commenced.

President Lincoln was made acquainted with our views and our programme for passing the forts and the capture of New Orleans by the navy, and our belief in its success, based on the fact that steam had wrought a revolution in naval warfare, practical proof of which was furnished in the achievement of the navy at Hatteras and Port Royal. If the forts were passed, the fall of New Orleans was certain. He became deeply interested, but was at first somewhat incredulous as to the feasibility of the enterprise. Among the important movements projected, this had not been one. Military men, of whom there were many in and about the War Department whom he saw daily, had not suggested it. They had a different programme, and he had faith that the combined army and navy descent of the river which had been resolved upon, and was a favorite scheme in army circles, would sooner and more easily secure the city than any naval expedition ascending from the Gulf. His attention had

been wholly directed to this combined movement for descending the Mississippi, which seemed more plausible and more powerful than the proposed ascent, where the fleet must struggle against a strong current and pass two of the most formidable forts on the continent. But, it was urged, the very fact that they were formidable, that the rebels confided in their strength, was an argument in our favor. On that side of the city they felt secure, and their chief preparations were and would be to resist approaches by the immense organizations from above, of which they had been and would continue to be duly warned. They were not making extra preparations for an attack from a different direction, and their suspicions should not be aroused. Secrecy would conduce to the success of a naval expedition. If it were to go forward, it was advisable that the measure should be discussed as little as possible, and for the time it was not necessary that the War Department should be made acquainted with our purpose. The naval success in the two preceding expeditions, of which he had known but little and which had been quietly conducted, inspired the President with confidence in naval management and naval power, and with very little hesitation he came into the project. Difficulty was experienced, however, in getting satisfactory and reliable topographical and hydrographical information, and correct knowledge of the actual defenses at the time. The Assistant Secretary of the Navy, as already stated, was acquainted with the river and the general aspect of the place, and felt confident the low shores and batteries could oppose no insurmountable obstruction, for the larger vessels could overlook them.

About this time Commander D. D. Porter returned with the steam frigate Powhatan from an irregular cruise on which he had been improperly sent. Having wholly failed to carry out the plan on which he had been surreptitiously despatched, he was subsequently ordered to the Gulf squadron, and had been stationed for a period off one of the mouths of the Mississippi. On his return the Navy Department, having decided to make a naval attack on the forts and city, was glad to avail itself of his recent observations, and of whatever information he possessed in regard to the river and the forts. He was therefore questioned

and soon taken into our confidence. He entered with zeal into the views of the Department, but expressed great doubts whether the forts could be passed until reduced or seriously damaged. This he said might be effected by a flotilla of bomb-vessels with mortars, which could in forty-eight hours demolish the forts or render them untenable. Commander Porter's proposition was a departure from the original plan of the Navy Department, and was strongly objected to by the Assistant Secretary. It would not, however, have been good administration to have omitted any means considered by the army and Commander Porter, whom it consulted, essential to success; and as a mortar flotilla would furnish additional power and would probably render success more certain, it received favorable consideration from the President and Secretary of the Navy, and was adopted as a part of the programme.

As a coöperative military force would be necessary, President Lincoln desired that General McClellan, who had just been installed General-in-Chief, should be advised of the plan and his approval and coöperation obtained. He therefore made an appointment for consultation at that officer's residence. At that time General McClellan occupied the house of Bayard Smith on the corner of H and Fourteenth streets, the present Washington residence of the Hon. Samuel Hooper of Boston. I had proposed that the conference should take place at the Executive Mansion, but the President objected that we should be constantly interrupted by persons whom he could not refuse to see—members of the Cabinet and others.

The meeting took place not far from the middle of November. My impression is, it was on the evening of the 15th. It was prior to the 18th of that month. I was accompanied to the conference by Assistant Secretary Fox and Commander D. D. Porter, both intelligent men in their profession and each acquainted with the passes of the Mississippi and aware of the difficulties to be overcome. These gentlemen called at my house by previous arrangement to talk over the subject about an hour before the meeting, and went with me to General McClellan's. The President, General McClellan, and the two gentlemen

named, with myself, were the only persons present at the conference.

General McClellan listened attentively to the proposition, but I thought with little confidence in its success. To reduce the forts and capture New Orleans he seemed to suppose must of necessity be a military operation, which would require an army of at least 50,000 men. He could not spare so large a force, nor had he a competent military officer of high rank whom he could detail to command such an expedition and conduct the siege. When, however, he understood it was to be a naval expedition, and that a military force of 10,000 men to garrison the forts and hold the city after the navy had obtained possession was all that was required, he came readily into the arrangement. We had already obtained the promise of 2,500 men for Ship Island, who were to be largely reinforced for a descent on Texas or an attack on Mobile. These troops, which were being recruited, might go forward with that expectation, and at the proper time when the navy was ready could be diverted to the Mississippi and New Orleans.

The proposal of Commander Porter for a bomb flotilla met his decided approval. He deemed such a battery absolutely essential to success. As our preparations would be formidable and consequently attract attention, and as there were spies and rebel sympathizers among us, it was concluded it would be best that the impression should continue that Texas or Mobile was the objective point, without specifying which; and to make matters still more indefinite, Charleston and Savannah were talked of. Profound and impenetrable secrecy in regard to New Orleans was enjoined upon each and all.

Major Barnard, Chief Engineer of the Army of the Potomac, who had been employed on Forts Jackson and St. Philip, and knew their strength, was by advice of General McClellan consulted. This officer fully appreciated the magnitude of the movement and its immense importance to the country. He also approved ascending the river to capture the city, but considered it all-important that the forts should be reduced before any attempt was made to go above them. This he recommended

should be a combined army and navy movement with ironclads and mortars.

The original proposition of the Navy Department was to run past the forts and capture the city, when, the fleet being above and communication cut off, the lower defenses must fall. But the military gentlemen deemed the reduction of the forts before the passage of the naval vessels was attempted to be absolutely indispensable. The General-in-Chief, whose time and mind were occupied with the immense army then organizing in front of Washington, designated Major Barnard for consultation and advice in this naval expedition, to which he could not give the attention its importance demanded. Major Barnard in successive interviews, and finally in a private memorandum, after giving the whole subject consideration, states: "I should consider necessary, first, a powerful fleet bearing from 300 to 400 guns (as many XI. and IX. guns as can be had); second, half a dozen ironclad gunboats (or as many more as can be had); third, 10,000 troops (all these might not be necessary in reducing the works, but they should be with the expedition to take immediate advantage of its success). I should hope to reduce the works without regular siege operations; but even if it became necessary to resort to them, the powerful artillery of the fleet would make a large siege train unnecessary. . . . The fleet should be accompanied by say 15 to 20 mortar vessels, such as are now being equipped. . . . But to pass those works (merely) with a fleet and appear before New Orleans is merely a raid—no capture. New Orleans and the river cannot be held until communications are perfectly established."

These were the general views of an officer who appreciated and always did justice to the navy; who did not think 50,000 men or regular siege approaches necessary; but who called for half a dozen or more ironclads when we had not one, and deemed fifteen or twenty mortar vessels essential, and the reduction of the forts before the passage of the vessels was attempted to be necessary.

Commander Porter took a similar view in regard to the reduction of the forts before the passage of the ships. He proposed to destroy the works in forty-eight hours with a mortar flotilla,

and was confident he could effect their destruction in that time. In its essential features his proposition corresponded with those of the army engineer. Both made it a point that the forts should be first reduced. Both were strongly combated by the Assistant Secretary, who adhered to the original naval programme, that the steamers could pass the forts without reducing or even bombarding them. But in deference to military authority and the confident assertions of Commander Porter, the proposition of the latter for a mortar flotilla was adopted as an auxiliary force, which might render assistance and be of no detriment to the expedition.

The labor of preparation, especially after the scheme of a bomb flotilla was adopted, became immense, and was entered upon with alacrity and energy. Suitable vessels were to be purchased and adapted to war purposes; immense mortars and shells were to be cast and mortar beds prepared; guns, carriages, projectiles, ordnance of every description ordered, and stores and supplies of all kinds provided.

It was now an interesting inquiry what naval officer should be selected to command the expedition. An officer was wanted to carry out a plan already determined upon by the Department—a plan that was not in all respects concurred in by the military authorities, which had not received their full sanction, nor had the original programme the approval of any naval officer. The duty to be imposed upon him was novel, and required courage, audacity, tact, and fearless energy, with great self-reliance, decisive judgment, and ability to discriminate and act under trying and extraordinary circumstances. He was to be made fully acquainted with the object and purpose of the Department, and to identify himself with them. He was also to be informed of the deviations which, on the suggestion and recommendations of others, had from abundance of caution been made. These he was to adopt or dispose of as he might judge best when on his post and in full command, but with a distinct understanding that he would be held accountable for the result. Every prominent name in the higher grades of the navy was studied and scanned. The merits and characteristics of each officer in the service had been canvassed in every particular after the war

commenced, and the especial traits and reliability of each one examined, that we might know his qualities and fidelity, in order that we might rightly judge to what place or position he was best adapted. Seniority had its influence, but was not always satisfactory. Among the few marked for ability, nautical experience, and long and faithful service, but who had never yet been given a high command nor been fully tested and tried as chief, was Captain David Glasgow Farragut. Other names were considered and their merits weighed, examined, and compared. The important question of earnest, devoted loyalty to the Constitution and the Union was of course a primary consideration. There was little doubt that the naval officers who had continued in service until the close of 1861, when this subject was under consideration, were faithful; but there were different degrees of fidelity as well as of capacity. Some officers had wavered at the beginning, who became afterward zealous in the cause; some throughout were cool and indifferent, who nevertheless obeyed orders as a matter of duty; but most of those who remained in the navy were patriotic and devoted to the country and the flag. Such as believed their obligations to their State or section to be paramount to those they owed their country had, prior to or at the commencement of hostilities, shown the sincerity of their convictions by tendering their resignations and leaving the service. With scarcely an exception, those who withdrew were Southern men.

But the general demoralization which prevailed throughout the South caused the Navy Department, and for that matter every branch of the Government, to hesitate and doubt who that belonged to that section could be trusted. So general was the defection that confidence in all was impaired. Such was the uncertainty in regard to men, and so sectional the conflict, that the Navy Department felt it a duty at the commencement of difficulties to supersede every Southern officer in command of a vessel on a foreign station. But while the great body of Southern officers left the service in that crisis, those that remained were, with scarcely an exception, of undoubted and marked fidelity and patriotism. Sacrifices which others did not and could not make they submitted to. From a sense of duty and love of country

they became aliens, exiles from their homes and kindred. Prominent among these was Captain Farragut, a Southern man by birth, a resident of the South from choice. He had never been a party man, and the doctrine of secession when introduced struck him with an abhorrence, as not only an error but a crime. Nationality is a sentiment with men who are employed professionally and for life in the Federal service; and among military, and especially naval officers, there is an undoubted tendency to centralism. Extraordinary efforts were made by leaders in the secession movement to enlist the State pride, local feeling, and personal ambition of naval officers of the South, and to weaken their Federal attachment. To a considerable extent these intrigues were successful. Failing to make themselves acquainted with the true political theory and structure of our system, many officers, naval and military, educated by their country and paid from its treasury, became estranged from the Union and abandoned the flag. Not so with Farragut. Nothing could shake his fidelity to the country and Government, which he loved with filial devotion and had served from his earliest youth. Residing at Norfolk, unemployed, on waiting orders, in the winter and spring of 1861, he watched with amazement and intense interest the exciting political movements of the period, and for the first time in his life became an active partisan. With his whole heart and energies he maintained the cause of the Union, and contributed to its success in Virginia by the triumphant vote in February, when the secessionists were beaten by 60,000 majority. In the belief that this clear expression of the popular sentiment was conclusive and the State made faithful, he reposed in comparative yet vigilant security until the firing on Sumter, when the violence of the secessionists, followed by the secret action of the Convention at Richmond, intelligence was received that the ordinance of secession had warned him that Virginia had swung from her moorings. The Convention was composed of a majority of nominal Union men, but many of them were of a passive and negative character, who trusted there would yet in some way be a compromise. The secessionists, who were violent, positive, revolutionary, and wanted no compromise, cowed and controlled them. On the day when

intelligence was received that the ordinance of secession had passed the Convention, Captain Farragut determined to abandon Norfolk and the State. His home should be in the Union; he would recognize and serve under no flag but that under which he was born, which for fifty years, in every land and clime, he had supported, and to defend which he had always been ready to yield his life; his hand should never be raised against it, nor would he be indifferent to its cause. Collecting hastily a few valuables, he placed his wife, sister, and their children in a carriage, put his loaded pistols in his pocket, and within two hours from the reception of the news that Virginia had decided to secede he proceeded to the Baltimore steamer, then at the wharf. Leaving all else behind, he resolved not to be denationalized or torn from the Union; he would know no country but that which he had loved and served from his childhood. The next day he passed through Baltimore, then in that excited insurrection which followed the massacre of the Massachusetts volunteers. The ordinary channels of travel by steamers and railroads were interrupted, and in the general confusion it was difficult to procure means of transportation or to leave the city. He found by accident that a common canal boat was leaving the wharf for Philadelphia. On this boat, which had indifferent accommodations for about eighteen persons, there were crowded nearly three hundred—fugitives, like himself and family, seeking refuge in the North. He reached New York after some annoyance and inconvenience with but slight pecuniary means to sustain himself and his exiled and dependent family. Being on waiting orders—for the Department, which did not then know these particulars, was moving with cautious, vigilant, and wary steps, careful and guarded whom to trust, and in the employment of Southern officers particularly circumspect—Captain Farragut felt his pecuniary resources insufficient for his support in the great metropolis. Always modest and unobtrusive, and almost a stranger in New York, he found a resting place for a few days under the roof of a friend whom he had previously known, until he could obtain a secluded place out of the city, adapted to his limited means. He succeeded in getting a modest cottage at Hastings on the Hudson at a rent of \$150 per annum, which he plainly fur-

nished, and to which, with one servant, he retired to await events—ready, however, and anxious to serve his country and give himself to her cause.

Active employment was not immediately given him, partly for reasons already stated, and partly because there were not at that early day naval vessels and positions for all in the higher grades.

A sifting of the naval officers was required to preserve harmony and render the service efficient. Some of them were old and infirm; some were physically and others mentally incompetent; but none would admit infirmity, and all wanted employment. While it might have been wrong to dismiss any of them from the service, it would have been a greater wrong to have given some of them active duty. Congress, therefore, at the extra session in the summer of 1861, took steps to relieve the Department of this difficulty, and under the act of August 3, 1861, for the better organization of the military establishment, a board of officers was convened to name such as should be retired from active service. Captain Farragut was made a member of that board. The duty was delicate and responsible, requiring sagacity, just discrimination, impartiality, and decision; for they were to take the Register and pass on the merits of each and every officer on the active list of the navy.

I had met and been favorably impressed by Captain Farragut some fifteen years previously, during the Mexican war, when I was officiating in the Navy Department as chief of a naval bureau. He at that time made what was considered a remarkable proposition to the then Secretary of the Navy, John Y. Mason, which was a plan to take the castle of San Juan d'Ulloa. I was present when he stated and urged his plan. It was characterized by the earnest, resolute, and brave daring which at a later day was distinctly brought out in our great civil conflict. Secretary Mason heard him patiently, but dismissed him and his project as visionary and impracticable. The officer and the interview I remembered; and though we had not met for years, the impression then made upon me remained and was alluded to. He was gratified with my allusion to it, and remarked they thought him crazy, but he was still satisfied the enterprise was feasible and that he would have taken the castle had he been

permitted the opportunity. Naval men in whom I confided spoke well of him, but I think few, if any, appreciated his high and really strong qualities, and most of them, if aware of the New Orleans expedition, and had the choice of a commander developed upon them, would likely have selected some other favorite. Farragut was attached to no clique, which is sometimes the bane of the navy, was as modest and truthful as he was self-reliant and brave, had individuality, and resorted to none of the petty contrivances common with many for position and advancement.

A division of the Atlantic squadron had been made in the autumn, when Flag Officer Du Pont embarked for Port Royal; and the extensive coast west of the Florida peninsula justified a division of the squadron in the Gulf. Such a division would throw the contemplated New Orleans expedition within the limits of the western squadron, and the necessary appointment of an additional flag officer would serve as a cover to the expedition, and not excite curiosity or comment as to any ulterior purpose. In scanning the Register with the Assistant Secretary for the flag officer to command the expedition he spoke favorably of Farragut, and his recommendation chimed in with my own impressions and convictions. Further inquiries were necessary, however, before deciding so important a question. This was attended with some difficulty and embarrassment. There were rivalries and jealousies in the service to be encountered. The knowledge of the expedition was confined to a few, and could not well be imparted to others, even to those whose opinions it was an object to ascertain. Nor would it do to select and make known the purpose in hand to one who would hesitate, or who had not the combined dash, daring, heroism, good sense, and judgment to excute the important trust. The responsibility of selecting the commander was great. Everything depended upon it, and the country would, and ought to, hold the Secretary of the Navy responsible for the selection. Many excellent officers in secondary or subordnate positions, who implicitly obey orders, fail as leaders or commanders-in-chief. In the long interval of peace our officers had not had opportunity to develop their respective peculiar or extraordinary qualities and capabilities,

nor had the Department the benefit of any such development to assist in its choice. Farragut had a good reputation, had been severely trained, and had always done his duty well, but had never commanded a squadron or achieved eminent distinction. His name is now a household word, and his fame extends abroad; but in 1861 he was not more prominent than others of his grade. Those great qualities which have since been brought out were dormant. He had a good but not a conspicuous record. All who knew him gave him the credit of being a good officer, of good sense and good habits, who had faithfully and correctly discharged his duty in every position to which he had been assigned. There were others also endowed with these traits, but the question was, had he, or any one, the higher qualities which are essential for a chief, and were indispensable for this the most important naval expedition ever undertaken by the United States, and which in fact had, in some respects, no precedent or parallel in naval annals? Would he adopt the Department plan, make it his own, carry it into effect? We had at that time no admiral or chief naval officer to identify himself in our programme, and whom to consult, and collision and rivalries among the commanders of squadrons were to be avoided; at the same time subordinates were to be impressed with confidence and zeal.

Flag Officer McKean, who succeeded Commodore Mervine in command of the Gulf squadron, found his health giving way under his extensive and exacting duties; it was therefore necessary as well as expedient that a division of the squadron should be made.

The Assistant Secretary, Mr. Fox, was directed to obtain Commander Porter's opinion of Captain Farragut. There had been an intimacy between the families of Farragut and Porter, dating back to the administration of Mr. Jefferson, when the father of Admiral Farragut had conferred essential favors on the elder Porter, who had reciprocated those favors by assisting young Glasgow Farragut, then a boy nine or ten years of age, to obtain a midshipman's warrant. He adopted him as a protégé, and made him virtually one of his family. In gratitude and affection young Farragut soon after took the name of David, and was so baptized in the Episcopal church at Newport. As

Commander Porter had been let into the secret of the expedition, and the relations between him and Farragut were such as here stated, there was propriety in getting his opinions preliminary to inquiries of Farragut himself. Admirals Shubrick, Joseph Smith, and one or two others, spoke well of him for the position of flag officer, without being at the time aware of the other and important ultimate design of the Department. It now became important to ascertain the ideas, feelings, and views of Captain Farragut himself, and this, if possible, before informing him of the expedition, or committing the Department in any respect. Nothing, as has been stated, was put on paper which related to the actual destination of the expedition, and every movement was made with caution and circumspection. Under these circumstances it was thought best to intrust Commander Porter with a confidential mission to proceed to New York on business relating to the mortar flotilla, and while there to ascertain, in personal interviews and conversations on naval matters and belligerent operations generally, the views of Captain Farragut on the subject of such a programme and naval attack as was proposed by the Navy Department, without advising him of our object or letting him know that the Department had any purpose in Porter's inquiries or knew of them. The following letter, written to Commander Porter, is so worded as to furnish no information of the expedition or the special object intrusted to him. It is the first preparatory order for bomb vessels and mortars destined for the Mississippi. His authority to see and sound Captain Farragut was unwritten:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, November 18, 1861.

Commander DAVID D. PORTER, U. S. Navy,
Washington, D. C.

SIR:

Proceed to Philadelphia and New York and examine at those places the schooners purchased by the Government, whether any of them are suitable for bomb vessels. In New York Mr. George D. Morgan, 54 Exchange Place, and Commander Henry H. Bell, will show you what vessels of that class are already fitting for service. If, in your judgment, none of these are capable of being arranged for mortars,

you are authorized to purchase six suitable vessels, and Commander Bell will arrange them as you may suggest. Consult with the Ordnance Bureau before you leave Washington relative to the mortars.

You will also examine the iron-clad vessels now building at Philadelphia, New York, and Mystic, Connecticut, and report the result on your return. Upon the completion of this duty, you will return to Washington.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES.

Commander Porter's report of his interviews with Captain Farragut was favorable, and that officer was, on the 15th of December, detached from special duty and ordered to Washington, that the Department, before committing itself in this important matter, might be fully assured in regard to him in all respects. The proceedings had reached such a point, the programme was so well settled and defined, and the preparations were so far advanced, that we could no longer postpone the selection of the officer who was to command; and it was equally necessary he should know the fact and the labor, dangers, and responsibilities he was to assume. Captain Farragut, under this summons, arrived in Washington on Saturday the 21st of December, and in order that the Department should continue uncommitted, the Assistant Secretary was authorized to have a free, social, and discretionary talk with him on the subject, before his interview with myself. This he did on the day Captain Farragut arrived at the house of the Postmaster-General, Mr. Blair, where he dined, and who, as I afterward learned, was present at that interview. Captain Farragut entered at once so heartily into the subject, and was so earnest and enthusiastic, that Mr. Fox unhesitatingly made known to him the purpose of the Department, and exhibited a list of the vessels which were being prepared for the expedition. Then, and in subsequent interviews with myself, he gave his unqualified approval of the original plan, adopted it with enthusiasm, said it was the true way to get to New Orleans, and offered to run by the forts with even a less number of vessels than we were preparing

for him, provided that number could not be supplied. He was made acquainted with the project of a mortar flotilla, to be commanded by Commander Porter. This, though not of his advisement, he said he would take with him, as it was a part of the enterprise, and some of the vessels and mortars had already been procured; but they were of less importance, in his estimation, and he placed less reliance on them than others. In every particular he came up to all that was expected and required. To obey orders, he said, was his first duty; to take any risk that might be imposed upon him by the Government, to obtain a great result, he considered obligatory; and believing it imperative that a good officer and citizen should frankly, but respectfully, communicate his professional opinions, he said, while he would not have advised the mortar flotilla, it might be of greater benefit than he anticipated, might be more efficient than he expected, and he willingly adopted it as a part of his command, though he apprehended it would be likely to warn the enemy of our intentions. He expected, however, to pass the forts and restore New Orleans to the Government, or never return. He might not come back, he said, but the city would be ours. Admiral Farragut was never profuse in promises, but he felt complimented that he was selected, and I saw that in modest self-reliance he considered himself equal to the emergency and to the expectation of the Government. He was, therefore, on the 23d of December, directed to hold himself in readiness to take command of the West Gulf squadron and the expedition to New Orleans.

Admiral Farragut and New Orleans

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE ORIGIN AND
COMMAND OF THE FIRST THREE NAVAL
EXPEDITIONS OF THE WAR.

PART TWO

THERE HAVE been particularity of dates and detail, and quotations from official documents, in relation to the preliminary arrangements for the New Orleans expedition, in order to correct some of the many strange statements and misrepresentations of its inception which appear in most if not all the histories that have been written of the war. Partiality and prejudice almost universally influence those who undertake to write contemporaneous history. Partisanship entered largely into the feelings of most of the writers of the time, and a desire to throw prominently forward party favorites, rather, it is to be hoped, than a wish to do injustice to others or to pervert history, warped their judgment and led them to ignore facts, to misstate the originators of the enterprise, and also the real commander, to draw false inferences, and to award undue credit to favored party leaders. Farragut, the great chief, the actual leader in the fight, the real hero who commanded the expedition and captured New Orleans, is represented as an assistant or subordinate to the General who accompanied him, but who was not under fire, and to whom, when the fighting was over, he, in pursuance of his orders from the Navy Department, turned over the forts and the city that he had captured. But Farragut was not a political

The Galaxy, XII (December, 1871).

partisan, nor the special favorite of a faction—was identified with no party, and would permit himself to be used by none.

In the second volume of Greeley's "American Conflict," purporting to give a history of the war, the fifth chapter is devoted to "Butler's Expedition to the Gulf—Capture of New Orleans." It is not said or intimated that it was Farragut's expedition, though Farragut commanded it, was engaged in preparation for it, and had his orders to command it long before Butler was informed of it, and actually did the fighting, passed the forts, and captured New Orleans, and several days after its capture gave it into the possession of General Butler. The principal features and groundwork of that chapter of the "American Conflict," which have misled others, are, in many respects, and especially as to the origin of the expedition and the principal commander, mere partisan conjecture—false inference—a perversion of history, not a record of facts. It is said, among other things, that "the substitution of Mr. Edwin M. Stanton for General Simon Cameron as head of the War Department caused some further delay." This substitution had no influence whatever on the movement, for the expedition and its object had not been communicated to the War Department when the change of Secretaries was made. Mr. Cameron's going out or Mr. Stanton's going into the Cabinet had nothing to do with it. It was not an enterprise of the War Department. The first knew nothing of the expedition while Secretary of War; the last was not advised of it until it was on the point of consummation. If the author of the "American Conflict" had anything beyond mere guesswork for his history, he was egregiously deceived. Among other things he says:

"Mobile had been generally guessed the object of General Butler's mysterious expedition, whose destination was not absolutely fixed even in the councils of its authors. An effort to re-annex Texas had been considered, if not actually contemplated. It was finally decided, in a conference between Secretary Stanton and General Butler, that a resolute attempt should be made on New Orleans; and though General McClellan, when requested to give his opinion of the feasibility of the enterprise, reported that it could not be prudently undertaken with a less force than 50,000 men, while all that could be spared to General

Butler was 15,000. President Lincoln after hearing all sides gave judgment for the prosecution."

Truth and error are here blended in a way to sacrifice the former. Had the author made inquiry, or investigated the case, he would have learned that Mr. Stanton was not appointed Secretary of War until the 13th of January, 1862—two months after the conference, of which he appears to have been ignorant, between the President, Secretary of the Navy, and others at General McClellan's house. At that time it was finally decided that the plan, which had its first conception in the Navy Department as early as September, and had been quietly considered and canvassed until the capture of Port Royal on the 17th of November, should be carried out. The navy had taken Ship Island, which may be considered perhaps the first step in this movement, and held it until troops were sent to occupy it. The naval vessels were in preparation, the bomb-vessels had been purchased and were undergoing the necessary alterations for the mortar beds, and orders for the mortars had been issued in November, 1861. Captain Farragut had been seen, summoned to Washington, consulted and directed to hold himself in readiness to command the expedition weeks before Mr. Stanton was appointed Secretary of War—consequently, before either he or General Butler was aware, or could have been consulted, or had thought of such an attempt, or knew it was to be made.

Mr. Parton, in his book, "General Butler in New Orleans," relates that "One day (about January 10), toward the close of a long conference between the General and the Secretary, Mr. Stanton suddenly asked: 'Why can't New Orleans be taken?' The question thrilled General Butler to the marrow. '*It can,*' he replied. This was the first time New Orleans had been mentioned in General Butler's hearing, but by no means the first time he had thought of it. The Secretary told him to prepare a programme, and for the third time the General dashed at the charts and books. General McClellan, too, was requested to present an opinion on the feasibility of the enterprise. He reported that the capture of New Orleans would require an army of 50,000 men, and no such number could be spared. Even Texas, he thought, should be given up for the present. But now General

Butler fired with the splendor and daring of the new project, exerted all the forces of his nature to win for it the success of the Government. He talked New Orleans to every member of the Cabinet. In a protracted interview with the President he argued, he urged, he entreated, he convinced. Nobly was he seconded by Mr. Fox, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, a native of Lowell, a schoolmate of General Butler's. His whole heart was in the scheme. The President spoke at length the decisive word, and the General almost reeled from the White House in the intoxication of his relief and joy."

The truth is, the President, instead of being urged, entreated, and at length convinced, in January, as stated, had "spoke the decisive word" as early as the middle of November, had many interviews with the Secretary of the Navy in regard to it, had examined charts and been made acquainted with the opinions of the Army Engineer, General Barnard, and advised that the auxiliary bomb flotilla proposed by Commander Porter should be adopted, before Mr. Stanton was a member of Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet. Mr. Fox, who is represented as *seconding* General Butler, had been engaged for many weeks in earnest, incessant labors and preparatory arrangements before General Butler was let into the secret. If General Butler "talked with every member of the Cabinet" on this subject, it was contrary to the express understanding which was faithfully observed by all others. General McClellan, who, it is represented, was requested by Secretary Stanton on the 28th of January to give "an opinion upon the feasibility of the enterprise," had made his views known in November. These views he appears to have repeated in January to the Secretary of War.

In the biography or autobiography of Admiral D. D. Porter, published by Headley, a statement is made of the origin of the expedition widely different from that of Parton, yet about as erroneous. Headley says:

"The Powhatan, having steamed over ten thousand miles with her condemned machinery, was now obliged to return to the United States, where she was laid up at about the time of the Du Pont expedition to Port Royal, and Lieutenant Porter was de-

tached. He immediately sought other active service, and the capture of New Orleans being proposed by him, he was put in communication with General McClellan, and General Barnard of the Engineers, to talk the matter over. They were unanimous in their opinion that the city could be taken, and preparations were accordingly made to attempt the capture of the forts at or near the mouth of the Mississippi river. Admiral Farragut was ordered to command the naval forces, and Lieutenant Porter, having recommended a large force of mortar vessels, was directed to equip them without delay."

Commander Porter was informed that the Navy Department intended to send an expedition to capture New Orleans two months earlier than General Butler, but he no more proposed it than that gentleman. He did, when let into the confidence of the Department, and made aware of its programme, "recommend a large force of mortar vessels," and he is entitled to the credit of having proposed that appendage to the squadron. It was not a part of the original programme of the Navy Department. This statement of Headley is in direct conflict with Greeley and Parton as regards those who proposed the expedition and the time of its inception. Headley claims Porter proposed it in November; Greeley and Parton that Stanton and Butler, in consultation, suggested it in January, and that the President then decided it. Neither statement is true. For reasons stated, Porter was made acquainted with the purpose and the programme of the Navy Department in November, but he no more originated it than Stanton or Butler in January. He and General Barnard should have the credit of appending the mortar flotilla to the original programme of the Navy Department. The historians must have little practical knowledge, and must have made only superficial investigation, who could come to the conclusion that such an expedition could have been instituted and completed within the time specified by themselves. The history of the world may be searched in vain for such an achievement. The navy programme for the expedition moved on favorably, though delayed beyond expectation, chiefly by the preparation of the bomb fleet of mortar vessels for Commander Porter, who

was never wanting in energy, and who, as well as others, was actively employed after the 18th of November in preparations for the enterprise.

I have no disposition to detract from the credit or real merits of General Butler. He was preferred to an educated and trained military officer for the reason that the army plan differed from the naval programme. The course which he pursued, and his brief administration of affairs at Baltimore, were such as to make him acceptable to Farragut in an expedition where the military General was to receive from the naval officer, who was the actual commander of the expedition, the captured city, and govern it, as he had governed turbulent and insurrectionary Baltimore. It was as acceptable to me as to the military officers that he should command the military forces which were to coöperate with Farragut, though perhaps for different reasons. That expedition was, in its inception and execution, not a military but a naval affair, in which the army was directed to assist the navy and in due time to garrison the forts and occupy and govern the city. Whatever may have been General Butler's views as to the practicability of taking either forts or city, or whatever may have been his plan, if he had any distinctive plan, few of the educated and trained military officers believed that the forts could be passed and the city captured by a naval force; and many, perhaps most, of the naval officers were also incredulous in that respect. Nor could it have been accomplished under the old order of things with sailing vessels under canvas against the opposing current of the Mississippi. But steam had wrought a revolution in naval tactics and naval warfare, and in encountering and passing batteries, which army officers were slow to realize. The passage of the forts had, however, been demonstrated to be a possibility, to those who were not irrevocably wedded to old ideas and usages, at Hatteras and Port Royal. Farragut realized, appreciated, and adapted his tactics to the change. General Butler had confidence in the navy and the enterprise greater than that of educated and more experienced military commanders. I never understood that he had any programme or plan, or that he claims to have had any. Nor do his instructions indicate that there was any military plan at

headquarters other than that of seconding the navy. On the 21st of March, Flag Officer Farragut, in a private note written on his flagship the *Colorado*, in the Gulf, says: "General Butler arrived yesterday. I called on him. He appears to have no definite plans, but will *hold what we take*." This is in conformity with the naval programme and our original understanding. General McClellan had said, at the conference which took place at his house in November, that to take the forts and capture New Orleans would require an army of 50,000 men. But when he said this he supposed it was to be a military movement. When informed it was to be a naval expedition, and that a coöperative force of only 10,000 men from the army was asked, to hold what the navy might take, he readily assented to the plan and promised us the required military assistance. The subject, however, did not burden his mind, at that time engaged in vast army movements; for being a naval expedition, it imposed on him neither labor nor responsibility beyond that of furnishing, when the Navy Department was prepared, the promised aid of 10,000 men. He evidently was less sanguine than others of us that the expedition would be a success, but he knew that the movement would give the rebels employment at a distant point, keep them out of Virginia, where they were concentrating their strength, and he was not unwilling to be relieved of the Lowell politician, who had attained high military rank, was restless, and not disposed to be idle or set aside.

The embarrassment which was experienced in consequence of the delay in fitting the vessels, creating the mortar fleet, procuring the mortars, shells, iron carriages, etc., rendered it advisable to retard the sailing of the troops. In the mean time, however, the promised detachment of 2,500 men went forward on the 27th of November, pursuant to previous agreement, in the transport *Constitution*, under the command of Brigadier-General Phelps, to take possession of Ship Island, which had been held since the 17th of September by the navy. General Butler, whom the War Department proposed to send out with the first detachment, and who as yet knew nothing of their ultimate destination, but supposed they were to move in due time on Mobile or Texas, was impatient for active service, and

to keep him employed, as well as to divert the attention of himself and others from the object in view, he was directed to prepare a paper upon Texas. Information was soon after received of the hostile attitude of Great Britain, in consequence of the capture of Slidell and Mason on the Trent, which furnished reason sufficient to satisfy their commander for detaining the New England volunteers. Until the naval vessels and the mortar flotilla were ready, these undisciplined volunteers were better in camp at the North, and could be better and more easily and more economically supplied than at Ship Island.

In January, 1862, a change took place in the administration of the War Department. Mr. Cameron, the retiring Secretary, had never been apprised of the naval programme and purpose to capture New Orleans; and his successor, who entered upon his duties on the 14th of January, was not immediately informed of it. The little which had been done and promised by the military branch of the Government up to this date had been by General McClellan, under the orders of the President. Everything had moved forward propitiously, but about the period of the change of Secretary of War an earnest application was made for men in the sounds of North Carolina and for more troops to carry on operations in South Carolina and Georgia. The Secretary of War recognized the application as both necessary and expedient, and being as yet unaware of the intention to capture New Orleans, but supposing the expedition to the Gulf was, as had been given out, to operate against Mobile or Texas, he yielded to the appeal of General Sherman and others, and orders were issued that the New England volunteers should go to Port Royal or North Carolina instead of Ship Island. Information of this fact first reached the Navy Department through General Butler, who was greatly disappointed that his coast operations in the extreme Southwest were to be interfered with. He and his chief of staff, General Shepley, called on his old neighbor and school-mate, Mr. Fox, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and made known his disappointment. He said the troops which had been sent to Ship Island by express request of the Secretary of the Navy were to be withdrawn, and the second instalment, then on board the steamer *Constitution* at Hampton Roads, instead

of going to the Gulf, were ordered to be disembarked or to remain on the Atlantic coast. Comprehending the difficulties that must follow from these untimely and conflicting orders, Mr. Fox hastened at once to the War Department with a view of getting the orders intercepted and countermanded. He found Mr. Stanton alone, and astonished that gentleman by stating to him the preparations that for more than two months had been on foot for the expedition, its object, and that the troops already at Ship Island, as well as those embarked on the *Constitution*, were a part of the enterprise, and essential to its success. They were regiments belonging to a military force of 10,000 men which General McClellan, with the knowledge and approval of the President, had promised the Secretary of the Navy as a co-operating military force in the proposed naval attack upon the Mississippi forts and New Orleans. Secretary Stanton took him by the hand in amazement. "An attack upon New Orleans by the navy?" said he. "I never have heard of it. It is the best news you could give me." An orderly was sent immediately for General McClellan, who on his arrival confirmed the statement, said there was an understanding by which the army, when the Navy Department had its arrangements completed, was to furnish the force named, and if the naval preparations were sufficiently advanced the troops must be forthcoming. So quietly had the preparations progressed, and so little had he been consulted in this naval expedition, that General McClellan was surprised when informed of the facts, the progress that had been made, and that Flag Officer Farragut had been selected and received his orders. This was the first knowledge Mr. Stanton had of the expedition. It was on the 28th of January, a fortnight after he entered upon his duties in the War Department, and more than two months after the expedition had been determined upon in the conference which took place at the house of General McClellan. The whole intervening time had been actively and unremittingly employed in making the necessary naval preparations.

So large a squadron as that which composed the expedition could not be prepared and fitted without time. Most of the immense mortars and shells were to be cast; some of the naval

vessels were on the stocks when the enterprise was first ordered, and even the Hartford, which became the flagship of Admiral Farragut, had not been refitted after her return from the East Indies when Commander Porter was sent off to prepare the mortar fleet. The whole energy and power of the Navy Department had been thrown into the work, and it is questionable if so large a force under similar circumstances was ever so speedily called out, prepared, and organized by any government.

Although Mr. Stanton first learned of the expedition indirectly as stated, he entered into it warmly and gave us a larger coöperating military force than had been promised by General McClellan. In an interview between him and myself immediately after his conversation with Mr. Fox and General McClellan, I explained, as did the President also, why the latter had been early consulted, and was our military confidant, and also the necessity for continued secrecy. The importance of secrecy he appreciated, but was not entirely satisfied that General McClellan should have been exclusively the confidant of the Government in a military movement. It is known that for some unexplained reason he and General McClellan had become estranged, and this may have been the beginning of that estrangement which resulted soon after in positive alienation.

If, as stated by Mr. Parton, General Butler "talked New Orleans to every member of the Cabinet," it was not with the approval of the head of the army, nor in unison with the views and convictions of Mr. Stanton or the President, and was in direct opposition to the injunctions of the Navy Department. There was reticence on the part of all others. In the orders of the Commander-in-Chief to General Butler, three weeks later, secrecy was still strictly enjoined, as will be seen by the first paragraph of General McClellan's orders:

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY, Feb. 23, 1862.

Major-General BUTLER, United States Army.

GENERAL:

You are assigned to the command of the land forces destined to coöperate with the navy in the attack on New Orleans. You will use every means to keep the destination

a profound secret, even from your staff officers, with the exception of your chief of staff and Lieutenant Weitzel of the Engineers. . . .

GEORGE B. McCLELLAN,
Major-General commanding, etc.

These rigid orders of the General-in-Chief to keep secret the destination of the expedition even from his staff officers would scarcely have been enjoined so late as February, if General Butler had, as stated, been rushing around Washington in January "talking New Orleans." It is doubtless one of the many mistakes of a partial biographer, who, in his efforts to give his subject undue and excessive praise, does him a positive injury. General Butler needs no false credit or manufactured notoriety in regard to the part taken by him in the New Orleans expedition and the measures attending and following it. He did not originate the expedition, nor urge or convince the President or any one having authority, as his biographer represents, for the project had been adopted and was in progress long before he ever interchanged a word with the President or Secretary of War or any one else on the subject. The same may be said in regard to Mr. Stanton, whom most of the historians of the civil war mention as having proposed, or been the chief mover and actor in the expedition, whereas he was not made Secretary of War, nor did he know anything of it, until it was near its consummation. Then, having just entered the War Department, he generously seconded the work, and ordered an increase of the military force from 10,000 men promised by General McClellan to 18,000, with an assurance we should have more, if more were necessary. But he never considered himself or the War Department responsible for the expedition, nor did he have other care or issue orders except to second and sustain the Navy Department in that enterprise. The fact that Admiral Farragut left for the Gulf about the time Mr. Stanton was made Secretary of War, and that the second instalment of troops for Ship Island sailed soon after, led the inconsiderate admirers of the Secretary of War and General Butler to infer, without knowledge or investigation, that these gentlemen were the originators of an expedition which re-

quired months of preparation, and which was on its way before these gentlemen were aware of its destination. Each entered earnestly into the plan when informed of it, each in his way performed well his part in forwarding the troops that were to coöperate with the navy but the expedition in its inception and preparation was not in any particular a project of the army or of the War Department. As soon as advised of the expedition, the naval programme, and the preparations which had been made, Mr. Stanton countermanded and corrected all military orders which interfered with it, and General Shepley, Butler's chief of staff, left Washington on the following day, the 29th of January, to join his command, and embarked on the army transport steamer *Constitution* on her second trip, which sailed immediately for Ship Island with the second instalment of troops. General Butler sailed from Hampton Roads on the 25th of February, nearly a month later, more than three months after the expedition had been ordered, and about four weeks after he was informed of the destination of himself and the force which he had raised in New England, to which the Secretary of War subsequently added other Western regiments, amounting to about 15,000 men, not 18,000 as had been promised. But disaster attended his voyage, and it was not until the 25th of March, just one month after leaving Hampton Roads, that he arrived at Ship Island.

Captain Farragut received his preparatory orders on the 23d of December, his full orders from the Navy Department as Flag Officer on the 20th of January, sailed from Hampton Roads on the 3d of February, and arrived at Ship Island on the 20th. The following are his orders, given into his hands before leaving Washington, and before either the Secretary of War or General Butler had been advised of the ultimate object of the expedition:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, January 20, 1862.

Flag Officer D. G. FARRAGUT, appointed to command
Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.

SIR:

When the *Hartford* is in all respects ready for sea, you will proceed to the Gulf of Mexico with all possible des-

patch, and communicate with Flag Officer W. W. McKean, who is directed by the enclosed despatch to transfer to you the command of the Western Gulf blockading squadron. . . There will be attached to your squadron a fleet of bomb vessels and armed steamers enough to manage them, all under command of Commander D. D. Porter, who will be directed to report to you. As fast as these vessels are got ready they will be sent to Key West to await the arrival of all and the commanding officers, who will be permitted to organize and practise with them at that port.

When these formidable mortars arrive and you are completely ready, you will collect such vessels as can be spared from the blockade, and proceed up the Mississippi river and reduce the defences which guard the approaches to New Orleans, when you will appear off that city and take possession of it under the guns of your squadron, and hoist the American flag therein, keeping possession until troops can be sent to you. If the Mississippi expedition from Cairo shall not have descended the river, you will take advantage of the panic to push a strong force up the river to take all their defences in the rear. As you have expressed yourself perfectly satisfied with the force given to you, and as many more powerful vessels will be added before you can commence operations, the Department and the country require of you success. . . . There are other operations of minor importance which will commend themselves to your judgment and skill, but which must not be allowed to interfere with the great object in view—the certain capture of the city of New Orleans.

Destroy the armed barriers which these deluded people have raised up against the power of the United States Government, and shoot down those who war against the Union; but cultivate with cordiality the first returning reason which is sure to follow your success.

Respectfully, etc.,

GIDEON WELLES.

These orders, it will be observed, are framed to meet the case and its requirements. They state briefly, but with some particularity, the great object in view and the manner in which

it was to be accomplished, but yet give the Flag Officer latitude and discretion in the employment of the means placed under his command.

There were, as has been mentioned, differences of opinion as to the best method of reaching New Orleans. Army officers believed the city could not be captured by a naval force ascending from the Gulf without first reducing Forts Jackson and St. Philip. This was also the opinion of Commander Porter, who, nevertheless, was confident that with such a mortar flotilla as was furnished him he could so reduce or impair the works as to render the passage of the steamers practicable. The original navy programme contemplated neither the reduction of the forts in advance nor a mortar flotilla, but the passage of the naval vessels and the capture of the city, when the forts would be compelled to surrender. Flag Officer Farragut took the bold and first decided views of the Department. It was his firm conviction that the naval steamers could run the forts without either reducing or bombarding them, and it was his belief that the passage could be effected, and probably would be, under the fire of their guns, independent of the bomb flotilla. Some vessels would doubtless be crippled, not improbably some would be destroyed; but most, perhaps all, could get above the forts, and when the fleet was between the forts and the city their fall was inevitable.

On the 10th of February the following communication was addressed to Flag Officer Farragut in furtherance of the great object intrusted to him, General Barnard having prepared a memorandum and given us sketches relative to the works on the Mississippi, procured from the Bureau of United States Engineers:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, February 10, 1862.

Flag Officer D. G. FARRAGUT, U. S. N., commanding Western
Gulf Blockading Squadron, Ship Island.

SIR:

I enclose to you herewith sketches from the United States Engineer Bureau relative to the works on the Mississippi river; also a memorandum prepared by General Barnard, United States Army, who constructed Fort St. Philip.

The most important operation of the war is confided to yourself and your brave associates, and every light possible to obtain should be carefully considered before putting into operation the plan which your judgment dictates.

It is reported that nineteen feet of water can be carried over the bar. If this is true, the frigate Mississippi can be got over without much difficulty. The Colorado draws about twenty-two feet; she lightens one inch to twenty-four tons; her keel is about two feet deep. The frigate Wabash when in New York in 1858 drew, without her spar-deck guns, stores, water casks, tanks, and coal (excepting thirty tons), aft twenty feet four inches, forward sixteen feet, or on an even keel eighteen feet four inches. This would indicate a very easy passage for this noble vessel, and if it be possible to get these two steamers over, and perhaps a sailing vessel also, you will take care to use every exertion to do so. The powerful tugs in the bomb flotilla will afford the necessary pulling power. The tops of these large steamers are from thirty to fifty feet above the fort, and command the parapets and interior completely with howitzers and musketry. The Wachusett at Boston; the Oneida, Richmond, Varuna, and Dakota at New York; and the Iroquois from the West Indies, are ordered to report to you with all practicable despatch, and every gunboat which can be got ready in time will have the same orders. All of the bomb vessels have sailed, and the steamers to accompany them are being prepared with great despatch. It is believed the last will be off by the 16th instant.

Eighteen thousand men are being sent to the Gulf to coöperate in the movements which will give to the arms of the United States full possession of the ports within the limits of your command. You will, however, carry out your instructions with regard to the Mississippi and Mobile without any delay beyond that imposed upon you by your own careful preparation. A division from Ship Island will probably be ready to occupy the forts that will fall into your hands. The Department relies upon your skill to give direction to the powerful force placed at your disposal, and upon your personal character to infuse a hearty coöperation among your officers, free from unworthy jealousies. If successful, you open the way to the sea for the great West,

never again to be closed. The Rebellion will be riven in the centre, and the flag to which you have been so faithful will recover its supremacy in every State.

Very respectfully, etc.,

GIDEON WELLES.

When Farragut was first consulted in December, and when he received his orders, the understanding was, as has been stated, that he should be aided by a military force of 10,000 men promised by General McClellan; but Secretary Stanton directed that the military force should be increased to 18,000 men. Of this additional assistance Flag Officer Farragut was first advised in the above communication of February 10, he having received his first orders before the Secretary of War was informed of the expedition, and left Washington and Hampton Roads with the understanding that the military aid would consist of but 10,000 troops.

In both these orders and in all and every communication and consultation which took place, the expedition was considered and treated as a naval expedition, originating in the Navy Department, and commanded by a navy officer, neither the War Department nor the General-in-Chief doing more than furnish the troops to hold what the navy might take. The programme and preliminary arrangements were made by the Navy Department, and the details were carried out by the navy, although the historians represent it as "Butler's expedition to the Gulf," first suggested by the Secretary of War, who on the 28th of January—or 10th, according to Parton, four days before Stanton was Secretary—"suddenly asked" General Butler, "Why can't New Orleans be taken?" When that question is represented to have been put, thousands of men had been for months employed and millions had been expended in preparations to solve that problem.

On the 20th of January, before either Secretary Stanton or General Butler had an intimation on the subject, Flag Officer Farragut received orders from the Secretary of the Navy to "reduce the defences which guard the approaches to New Orleans, when you will appear off that city and take possession of it under

the guns of your squadron, and hoist the American flag therein, keeping possession until troops can be sent to you." These orders were literally obeyed three months later, when Flag Officer Farragut on the 25th of April appeared off New Orleans with no military force whatever to aid him, and took possession of the place under the guns of his squadron on the 26th; hoisted the American flag and kept possession until he sent to General Butler to come up with his troops and occupy and govern the city, which he did several days after, on the 1st of May.

General McClellan, the General in Chief, in his orders to General Butler on the 23d of February, more than a month subsequent to the orders of the Secretary of the Navy to Flag Officer Farragut, says. "It is expected that the navy can reduce the works (St. Philip and Jackson). In that case you will *after their capture* leave a sufficient garrison in them to render them perfectly secure." The works were not reduced, but they fell of necessity after the fleet got above them and the city was captured. This was the first naval programme, modified on the suggestion of Commander Porter and the advice of Generals McClellan and Barnard, who considered a reduction of the forts indispensable. There was no conflict of orders, understanding, or details, between the naval and military branch of the Government or the commanding officers or the forces of either; but not one of the several histories of the war gives a true statement of the case or awards to the navy or the Navy Department the credit which belongs to either.

Farragut, the real commander, chieftain, and fighting man of the expedition, who passed the forts and captured the city, is, in these histories, made subordinate and second to the General who had been detailed to assist him, who had no plan or programme of his own, who was in no battle, whom the Flag Officer invited up from below and to whom he gave possession of the place; while the Navy Department, which originated, planned shaped, and directed the whole, and would have been held responsible for it had it proved a failure, is almost wholly ignored, and the credit is given to persons who did not devise it, and were entirely ignorant of it until it was near its consummation. It is but justice to General Butler to say that he has in his place on

the floor of the Congress declared that the capture of New Orleans was by Farragut and the navy, and not by him and the army. Admiral Farragut, whose high qualities and great and meritorious services all now admire, and which can never be over-estimated, in his letter of December 31, 1864, addressed to a committee of New York merchants who as a testimonial of their esteem and gratitude made him a pecuniary present with which he purchased a dwelling, says with equal truth and modesty in accepting it: "As to the duties which you speak of that were performed by myself in command of the fleet in the South and Southwest, I have only to say, as I have repeatedly said before, that they were done in obedience to orders from the Department at Washington. I have carried out the views of the Department in accomplishing what I promised to endeavor to do."

The Confederate authorities at Richmond, who believed the lower defenses of the river impregnable, were astonished with the intelligence that the forts had been passed and New Orleans had fallen. They had not anticipated a naval attack, nor believed in the possibility of naval success if an attack were made. The preparations for the expedition, which commenced in November, had been carried forward for four months without creating alarm or exciting in that quarter suspicion. Not until the latter part of March did the rebel General Lovell, in command of the city, entertain apprehensions of the impending blow. Even then the Confederate Government at Richmond, as well as Beauregard at Corinth, were wholly incredulous and deaf to his appeals. Their attention and efforts were in the opposite direction, where General Halleck and others were organized for a descent from the north. A few brief extracts from the official report of General Lovell, written on the 22d of May, a month after the passing of the forts, opens to us the true condition of affairs as they existed prior to and at the time of the capture of the city. He says: "I applied to Richmond, Pensacola, and other points for some 10-inch columbiads and sea-coast mortars, which I considered necessary to the defence of the lower river, but none could be spared; the general impression being that New Orleans would not be attacked by the river. . . . The

forts had seventy-five or eighty guns that could be brought successively to bear on the river, were manned by garrisons of well-trained artillerymen, affording a double relief to each gun, and commanded by officers who had no superiors in any service. . . . The general impression of all those to whom I applied was, that the largest guns should be placed above New Orleans, not below, although I had notified the Department on the 22d of March that in my judgment the fleet only awaited the arrival of the mortar vessels to attempt to pass up the river from below. . . . Every Confederate soldier in New Orleans, with the exception of one company, had been ordered to Corinth, to join General Beauregard in March. . . . The fourteen vessels of Montgomery river defence expedition had been ordered by the Department, when completed, to be sent up to Memphis and Fort Pillow; but believing the danger of attack from below, I detained six of them at New Orleans, of which change the Department was fully advised. . . . When the Secretary of the Navy ordered the steamer *Louisiana* to be sent also up the river, I protested, through the War Department, being satisfied that we required more heavy guns below. . . . A few moments after the attack commenced, and the enemy succeeded in passing with fourteen ships, as described in General Duncan's report, and the battle of New Orleans as against ships of war was over. . . . The battle for the defence of New Orleans was fought and lost at Forts Jackson and St. Philip." The apprehensions of General Lovell were first excited, as Farragut apprehended they would be, by the mortar flotilla. He at once commenced preparations for defence from a naval attack, and made appeals to his superiors for assistance to avert the threatened danger so soon as he learned that the mortar fleet had reached Key West. This was what Farragut would have avoided by dispensing with the mortar fleet. The bombardment would, in his opinion, inflict less injury than we supposed, while such a fleet would impede his movements, excite suspicion, arouse vigilance, and lead to preparations for a more formidable defence.

But, finding the matter had been decided upon before he was selected or consulted, he acquiesced in that part of the programme, gave the mortar fleet place and opportunity, and

generously awarded the flotilla credit for its power, and the energy and skill with which the mortars were served. Their fire through six days was tremendous, but did less injury to the forts and inflicted less loss of life than seemed possible after such a fire as they endured. Fort St. Philip was scarcely damaged, and Fort Jackson, which sustained the principal assault, was, notwithstanding the barracks were burned, about as formidable at the close as at the commencement. General Duncan, who was in command of the defences, admits his men were demoralized after Farragut and the naval vessels had passed the forts, but wrote on the 27th of April, before the forts surrendered: "We are just as capable of repelling the enemy to-day as we were before the bombardment."

There can be no doubt that the tactics of Farragut were correct; that the mortar fleet was, as he apprehended, a warning to the enemy, and that it to some extent embarrassed his operations. That division of his force, however, if it did not accomplish all that was promised and expected, was well commanded, and the mortars were well served. Probably no equal number of mortars ever expended a greater amount of ammunition and shells in the same space of time, or fired more accurately, but as regards the fire of the enemy and their power of resistance the bombardment was ineffectual. But Farragut was resolved that this part of the programme which was not of his advisement, should have full scope and full opportunity to display its power, and, if possible, destroy or impair the works. He therefore suspended his movements for six days; gave Commander Porter, with the mortars, not only the forty-eight hours which were represented to be sufficient to demolish or render untenable the forts, but twice and thrice that number of hours to do the work. At length, after a tremendous bombardment for six days, when the men were overcome with fatigue, and the ammunition and shells of the mortar flotilla were nearly expended without seriously diminishing the enemy's fire, Flag Officer Farragut put in execution his own bold plan, which was also the original programme of the Navy Department, and passed the forts "under a most terrific fire," says Commander Porter, who witnessed it from below. "Such a fire I imagine the world

has rarely seen," said Farragut. Had the works been seriously damaged, this could hardly have been the case. Captain Bailey, second in command, states that "the mortar fleet had been playing upon the forts for six days and nights without perceptibly diminishing their fire"; in fact, the enemy was "daily adding to his defences" during the entire bombardment. That Commander Porter did not succeed, as he promised and expected, in reducing the forts in forty-eight hours, was not owing to any want of energy, courage, or perseverance on his part and that of his gallant associates, but to an error of judgment and misconception of the effects of shells falling upon a casemate fort.

In the end such a fort must undoubtedly yield to a continued bombardment, but not in forty-eight hours, nor in one hundred and forty-eight hours, as was demonstrated to the satisfaction of every officer in the squadron. During those six days, the rebel naval defences, the ironclads, the fire rafts, the rams and obstructions which really constituted the peril to Farragut's fleet were increased by every hour's delay. The enemy improved the time from the arrival of the first mortar boat at Key West in augmenting his defences. That arrival indicated the plan of attack; he took alarm, commenced preparations, and then and through the six days of bombardment he was stimulated to his utmost energies to resist the advance of the squadron. Commander Porter says in his official report, after one hundred and forty-four hours of incessant fire from the mortars, the enemy was "daily adding to his defence and strengthening his naval forces with iron-clad batteries." This was what Flag Officer Farragut, with keen professional sagacity, had predicted; but the veteran hero, in deference to others, to the policy adopted, and to the extraordinary efforts of the Department, which had got up the mortar flotilla on the recommendation of Commander Porter and the army officers, submitted to the delay, although it added to the difficulties he was to encounter. With a generosity characteristic of the man, he, after the assault was over, abstained from any censure or reflection on those who differed with him and had caused a deviation from the original naval programme, which he pronounced, and which the result proved, was correct. If he could not commend the mortar scheme

for such a work as was given him, he forbore from any public condemnation of it in his official reports. He spoke of the "tremendous fire" on the forts "from the mortars," remarked that "Commander Porter most gallantly bombarded them"; but while the mortars failed to seriously impair the defences, Flag Officer Farragut is studiously careful not to say, as did the second officer in command, it was "without perceptibly diminishing their fire." He knew the fact, but from delicacy would not proclaim it. The result was sufficient; the problem of running the forts and the effect of bombarding them was solved. The lesson in the Mississippi and at Port Royal and Hatteras teaches that as against naval steamers forts are useless, unless connected with some system of obstruction, and that their passage will never be attended with much risk or danger.

The official report of Commander Porter, made to the Secretary of the Navy direct, instead of the Flag Officer, represented the injuries by the bombardment as much more effective than is admitted by Generals Lovell and Duncan, and as was testified by the terrific fire of the forts when the fleet passed up. The reports of the Confederate generals, which correct some apparent discrepancies that could not at the time be reconciled, did not come into my hands until after the close of the rebellion. There was an alleged inconsistency in the representation that the defences were seriously impaired with the fact that there was a "terrific fire," tremendous and unabated, when the passage was finally made. While Flag Officer Farragut was conscious that his tactics and professional talents and sagacity were fully vindicated by what had been done, and what had failed to be done, he was not stinted in his award of credit to the brave men who had been employed in the mortar service, but gave to every man the honor he earned.

In his official report of April 30th, Commander Porter says: "On the 23d I urged Flag Officer Farragut to commence the attack with the ships, as I feared the mortars would not hold out, the men were almost overcome with fatigue, and our supply ships lay a good way off." Had this report been made, as is usual and as regulations require, to the Flag Officer instead of the

Department, this statement would never have appeared. Those of us who knew the facts, the feelings and views of Farragut, his dauntless courage and iron will when once engaged, his desire to dispense with the mortar flotilla which embarrassed his movements and restrained his prompt, impulsive action, any statement that he delayed, or which conveys the impression that he hesitated at the critical moment to execute his own plan, had little effect. He needed no urging from any one to move—certainly not from one who from the first had advised that the forts should be reduced before the passage of the fleet was attempted. It would be reversing the position, plan, and tactics of the Flag Officer and the commander of the mortar fleet.

In justice to Farragut and to truth, I think it proper here to present the advice and proposition which Commander Porter submitted preceding the attack and the passage of the forts: "In my opinion there are two methods of attack: one is for the vessels to run the gauntlet of the batteries by night, or in a fog; the other, to attack the forts by laying the big ships close alongside of them, avoiding the casemates, firing shells, grape, and canister into the barbette, clearing the ramparts with boat guns from the tops, while the smaller and more agile vessels throw in shrapnel at shrapnel distance, clearing the parapets and dismounting the guns in barbette. The large ships should anchor with forty-five fathoms of chain with slip-ropes; the smaller vessels to keep under way, and be constantly moving about, some to get above, and open a cross fire; the mortars to keep up a rapid and continuous fire, and to move up to a shorter range. The objections to running by the forts are these: It is not likely that any intelligent enemy would fail to place chain across above the forts, and raise such batteries as would protect them against our ships. Did we run the forts we should leave an enemy in our rear, and the mortar vessels would have to be left behind. We could not return to bring them up without going through a heavy and destructive fire. If the forts are run, part of the mortars should be towed along, which would render the progress of the vessels slow, against the strong current at that point. If the forts are first captured, the moral effect would

be to close the batteries on the river and open the way to New Orleans; whereas if we don't succeed in taking them, we will have to fight our way up the river. Once having possession of the forts, New Orleans would be hermetically sealed, and we could repair damages and go on our own terms and in our own time."

Flag Officer Farragut's order of battle, which is among the published documents relating to passage of the forts and the battle itself, shows that he adopted none of these suggestions. He did not yield to the advice that "the large ships should anchor with forty-five fathoms of chain," "the smaller vessels to be continually moving about," nor did he deem it expedient that "part of the mortar vessels should be towed along" when he passed the forts, nor did he "return to bring them up." His tactics, or mode, as he expresses it, were of a bolder, more audacious, and wholly different character. He left the mortar vessels behind him as an incumbrance, anchored no vessels, but dashed on amid flame and smoke, danger and death, under a terrific fire such as the world has seldom witnessed, and performed one of the most wonderful and daring achievements recorded in history.

Commander Porter beheld from below this terrible but successful performance of his chief, who cast aside all the schemes and advice which had been tendered him for reducing the forts and opening the way for his ships without encountering what appeared to less resolute minds destruction and death. After witnessing the great success, which was in total disregard of his propositions, and after hearing that New Orleans was captured by his triumphant chief, Commander Porter wrote the Navy Department that he urged the Flag Officer to make the attack on the 23d. Ten days later he wrote an unofficial letter to the Assistant Secretary, reiterating the statement that he had urged the Flag Officer to make the attack, but requested that the statement might be suppressed in the published documents. The Department declined to mutilate and change the record, and omit a statement the truth of which was deliberately and secretly reaffirmed by the author.

Farragut, who was as generous and forgiving as he was brave

and resolute, saw with less surprise than regret the extraordinary statement of Commander Porter. He had no apprehensions, however, that the truth would not ultimately appear. The Department and all familiar with the expedition, he said, were aware of his views and tactics from the beginning; that he had never believed in reducing the forts before passing them, or anchoring his vessels in the attack, and was entirely opposed to the mortar flotilla which Commander Porter and the army officers had so much at heart, and which the Department on their recommendation had adopted as indispensable.

In a letter to me on this and other subjects at a later period he said: "I was ordered to Washington, when the Department informed me I should have all the vessels I desired and many more, including a number of mortar boats. To this I replied I did not want the *latter*, as they would be more in my way than otherwise, as I felt satisfied they would be an impediment in my mode of attack. I presume this was the origin of my supposed opposition to the mortar boats. But as the Department seemed to think they were indispensable and had provided gunboats to tow and protect them in every emergency, I made no further objection."

It is not part of my present purpose to enter upon or narrate the battles and incidents of the expedition. These have been elsewhere related in the official reports of the officers themselves. But the capture of the city was not the conclusion of the expedition nor the completion of Flag Officer Farragut's instructions.

It will be recollected that the orders of the Secretary of the Navy of the 20th of January directed him after the capture of New Orleans: "If the Mississippi expedition from Cairo shall not have descended the river, you will take advantage of the panic to push a strong force up the river to take all their defences in the rear." This was an important part of the programme and of his original orders. In pursuance of them, Flag Officer Farragut, immediately after taking the city, sent forward a detachment of seven vessels up the river under Captain Craven, to obtain possession of the intermediate places between him and the flotilla from Cairo, which, with the army, was by arrangement to

descend the Mississippi, and meet and form a junction with the naval force from the Gulf. On the 7th of May, Commander James S. Palmer, in the steamer Iroquois, appeared off Baton Rouge, and was followed by Flag Officer Farragut himself and a military force on the 10th. The place surrendered, as did Natchez, Port Hudson, and Grand Gulf, soon after, and indeed every intermediate place on the river except Vicksburg, to which Commander S. P. Lee had been sent in advance in the Oneida. This place, in consequence of its elevated site, made a large coöperating military force necessary to take possession of and occupy the works.

To give the details of the harassing river conflicts and the many perplexities and disappointments which, in consequence of inadequate military support, attended the naval operations in the Mississippi, is not here essential. The expected army aid from the north totally failed to meet the ascending squadron, although the steamers from Cairo under Flag Officer Davis, the successor of the heroic Foote, met and formed a junction with the vessels from the Gulf squadron. In all respects and in every particular, both the Gulf squadron and the Mississippi flotilla performed their parts and did all that the Navy Department had promised, or the Government required or expected, to carry out the original programme. For two months after the capture of New Orleans, Flag Officer Farragut remained on protracted and unpleasant duty on the river at or near Vicksburg, waiting the promised approach of an army from the north. But he waited in vain. One or two brief extracts from his patient, uncomplaining letters indicate the character of the man and the actual condition of affairs:

FLAGSHIP HARTFORD, ABOVE VICKSBURG, }
June 28, 1862, }
Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy,
Washington, D. C.

SIR:

I passed up the river this morning, but to no purpose; the enemy leave their guns for the moment, but return to them as soon as we have passed and rake us. . . .

I am satisfied it is not possible for us to take Vicksburg without an army force of 12,000 to 15,000 men. General Van Dorn's division is here, and lies safely behind the hills. The water is too low for me to go over twelve or fifteen miles above Vicksburg.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT.

On the 6th of July he wrote me from "above Vicksburg": "I have to inform you that we are still at this place, bombarding the peninsula. . . . I received a telegram yesterday from General Halleck (a copy of it is herewith enclosed), by which it appears that he will not be able to coöperate with us for some weeks yet."

The following is the telegram from General Halleck referred to in the above extract:

UNITED STATES MILITARY TELEGRAPH, }
MEMPHIS, July 3, 1862. }

[By telegraph from Corinth.]

Flag Officer FARRAGUT, commanding United States flotilla in the Mississippi.

The scattered and weakened condition of my forces renders it impossible for me at the present to detach any troops to coöperate with you on Vicksburg. Probably I shall be able to do so as soon as I can get my troops more concentrated; this may delay the clearing of the river, but its accomplishment will be certain in a few weeks.

Allow me to congratulate you on your great success.

H. W. HALLECK, Major-General.

The troops were never so concentrated under General Halleck as to coöperate with the navy at Vicksburg. From causes which it is unnecessary here to relate, there was a total failure on the part of the army to carry out and complete their part of the original programme of the New Orleans and Mississippi expedition. A year's delay, with much national depression and great loss to the country, was the consequence.

When finally informed of the inability of the army to carry

out their part of the campaign, I, in view of the subsiding of the waters in the Mississippi, which endangered the safety of the vessels, the sickly climate, and the necessity of operations elsewhere, wrote Flag Officer Farragut a communication from which I make the following extracts:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, July 14, 1862.

Flag Officer D. G. FARRAGUT, commanding,
etc., near Vicksburg, Miss.

SIR:

The evacuation of Corinth has much lessened the importance of your continuing your operations on the Mississippi. The army has failed to furnish the necessary troops for the capture of Vicksburg, and has not at present, it is represented, an available force to send there to coöperate with you in its capture. . . . All proper measures should be adopted to get the part of your fleet now above Vicksburg below that place, with as little injury and loss of life as possible.

Nothing is to be gained by a contest with the batteries of the enemy. . . .

I am respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES.

On the 29th of July Flag Officer Farragut wrote me from New Orleans:

FLAGSHIP HARTFORD, NEW ORLEANS, }
July 29, 1862. }

HON. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy,
Washington, D. C.

SIR:

I am happy to inform the Department that I arrived here yesterday about noon with the ships Brooklyn, Richmond, and Hartford, and gunboats Pinola and Kennebec, the other gunboats, excepting the Katahdin and Kineo, left at Baton Rouge for the protection of the troops, having preceded me.

On the 20th instant I received the order of the Department to drop the ships down the river, and not risk them before the batteries more than possible. The river had fal-

len very much, and my anxiety was great that I should not be able to get the large ships down. . . .

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT,

Flag Officer commanding Western Gulf Blockading
squadron.

Further military operations in the direction of Vicksburg were for the season suspended, not, however, through any defect in the original programme, or any mismanagement or failure on the part of the navy or the Navy Department. Flag Officer Farragut did all that was required of him, that he promised to do, and more than was believed by many possible for him to accomplish. If the country did not gain possession of Vicksburg or capture Mobile in 1862, it was through no fault or failure of the Navy Department or of the naval commander, who was ready at all times to meet and coöperate with the army for that purpose.

The War Department, after the reverses before Richmond in the summer of 1862, became paralyzed and appeared for a time to lose interest in the Mississippi movement. Its attention was more earnestly engaged elsewhere. But the Navy Department was unwilling to relinquish the advantages it had gained, even after General Halleck's despatch from Corinth, followed by its own orders for the vessels to drop below Vicksburg. In these views of the Department Flag Officer Farragut participated, and after descending the river he lingered some days in the lower Mississippi.

Before leaving Vicksburg for New Orleans, he made arrangements for Commodore William D. Porter to remain with the iron-clad steamers Essex and Sumter, of the Mississippi flotilla, below Vicksburg, to keep open the navigation of the river, and coöperate with any military force, should any be sent. Commodore William D. Porter was a brother of Commander David D. Porter, with whom he is often confounded, and brother-in-law of Admiral Farragut, they having married sisters. He was a man of undaunted courage, and had distinguished himself under Flag Officer Foote on the Western waters, particularly at Forts Henry, Columbus, and other places, at the former of which he

sustained severe injuries. On the 16th of July the rebel iron-clad ram Arkansas, a formidable vessel, came out of the Yazoo, and, dashing through the fleet which lay at anchor with low fires, wholly unprepared, she inflicted some damage on the vessels, and hastened to take refuge under the guns of Vicksburg. A gallant attempt was made on the 22d of July by Commodore W. D. Porter to destroy her under the fire of the rebel batteries, but not succeeding, he then ran down with his vessels to Flag Officer Farragut's command. A rebel force, under General Breckinridge, made an assault on Baton Rouge a few days after, and the Arkansas left Vicksburg to assist in the attack, but was met by Commodore W. D. Porter in the Essex, run ashore, and destroyed. The destruction of this formidable monster gave great satisfaction to the service and the country. Flag Officer Farragut wrote the Department:

FLAGSHIP HARTFORD, BATON ROUGE, }
August 7, 1862. }
Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy,
Washington, D. C.

SIR:

It is one of the happiest moments of my life that I am enabled to inform the Department of the destruction of the ram Arkansas; not because I held the ironclad in such terror, but because the community did. . . . I arrived here to-day at 12 M., in company with the Brooklyn, Westfield, Clifton, Jackson, and Scioto. I had sent up the Clifton before. . . . I will leave a sufficient force of gunboats here to support the army, and will return to-morrow to New Orleans and depart immediately for Ship Island with a light heart that I have left no bugbear to torment the communities of the Mississippi in my absence.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT, Flag Officer.

Foreseeing the disastrous consequences which must result from an abandonment of the advantages which the navy had obtained on the Mississippi, and that the rebels would hasten to fortify and strengthen themselves at Vicksburg and other

places where they were then weak, thereby interrupting the navigation of the river, and keeping open their communication with Texas, from whence they derived immense supplies, I urged decisive measures, and finally on the 2th of July addressed the Secretary of War a letter on the subject, from which I make the following extracts:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, July 29, 1862.

Hon. E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

SIR:

. . . The long detention of so large a naval force before Vicksburg, in consequence of the absence of a sufficient land force to coöperate with the navy in taking and holding the place, is, I am aware, a source of regret to you as well as to myself.

It is a pressing necessity that so important a place should not be held by the rebels. While it is in their possession it not only interrupts navigation and keeps our squadron unemployed, but impairs its efficiency in cutting off communication and transportation of stores and troops to sustain the enemy. . . . We cannot have a rigid river police and effective interdiction between the opposite shores while Vicksburg remains an obstacle to prevent or at least retard operations. I would invite especial attention to the remarks in relation to General Williams and his force, and the opinion expressed that he can go anywhere thirty miles into the interior below Vicksburg, and, supported by the gunboats, destroy the enemy's stores, capture the cattle they have grazing, and be instrumental in keeping open the river.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES.

Frequent personal interviews took place and were wasted in vain efforts to procure military coöperation to carry out to full consummation the programme of the campaign in conformity with the original understanding. These interviews need not be more particularly specified, but the documents on file in the departments, from which brief extracts are given, verify the statements which are made.

Unquestionably, the passage of Forts Jackson and St. Philip, with the capture of New Orleans, was not only the most important of the three naval expeditions commenced the first year of the rebellion, but was the memorable event of the war. It was a blow at the heart of the Confederacy when in its full vigor and strength, before the rebels had become enfeebled and exhausted—a blow from which they never recovered. In that great achievement Farragut stands out the grand, imposing figure, and his high, heroic daring, and the tact and ability he displayed as a commander, will make him, when the true history of the war is written, conspicuous beyond others through all time. Attempts have been made to award honors that are justly his to others, and by some to appropriate to themselves credit which belongs to him.

I have here related the essential facts of the origin and command of the three important expeditions instituted by the Navy Department in the first year of the war, and especially of that memorable one where the great naval chief earned the honors which placed him at the head of the Navy. Of subsequent daring and scarcely less important services at Grand Gulf and Port Hudson in 1863, and Mobile in 1864—at which last place he was neither aided nor incumbered by mortar flotillas, but where on each occasion he exhibited those remarkable qualities which distinguish and exemplify the great commander—I have not made mention. They must be reserved for another occasion.

It is to be regretted that the last days of this brave, truthful, amiable, and exemplary man, for whom his countrymen had, and always will retain, a deep and abiding affection and regard, should have been subjected to petty annoyances from a few who were envious of his fame, or incapable of doing him justice. Although honored and loved by his countrymen and at the head of the navy, he does not appear to have had the confidence of those who administered its affairs for the last eighteen months of his life, or to have been consulted in matters which personally and officially interested and legitimately belonged to him as naval chief. Great changes were made in the service without his knowledge and against his judgment. He was compelled to receive orders which notoriously emanated from one of inferior rank.

The office of Admiral, which Congress had created for him in acknowledgment of his distinguished and unequalled services, was, he saw, destined by favoritism to pass to another. In various ways ignoble and ungenerous minds hastened to mortify the great and unassuming naval chief. In derogation of his real rank and position as chief and head of the navy, he was made Port Admiral or usher, to wait upon and receive naval officers at New York, an employment which self-respect and regard for the navy compelled him to decline. Among other indignities was that of ordering the uniform and the flag of Admiral which he had adopted when the Government created and conferred on him the office to be changed, and substituting therefor a different uniform and another flag, wholly unlike the coat he wore, and unlike the symbol of rank which was identified with him, and from the time the office was created had floated above him. Farragut would neither change his coat nor permit the tawdry substitute for the Admiral flag to wave over him. On his special, personal application, which he felt humiliated to make, the Secretary of the Navy permitted him to be spared these indignities during his life, but it was with the knowledge that the flag which he had earned—the emblem he had chosen and prescribed as the symbol of highest naval rank—was to be buried with him. It would be painful to dwell on the many annoyances to which this brave and noble officer was subjected during the last few months of his existence.

“There is a tear for all that die,
A mourner o’er the humblest grave;
But nations swell the funeral cry,
And triumph weeps above the brave.”

The people throughout the Union mourned the death of the good Admiral. Thousands from the surrounding country crowded around his bier at Portsmouth, but high official dignitaries were not there. Neglect of the remains of the great naval chief and of his family marked the close. The expenses of his funeral, which was necessarily public at Portsmouth, where he died, were borne by his widow, who has never been remunerated or noticed by the Government. She, who fled with him from her home and

native State, became with him an exile and shared his fortune and privations in a simple hired cottage on the Hudson, now lives in a house purchased with the funds contributed by a few private citizens of New York in grateful acknowledgment for his heroic and patriotic services. Those services were unsurpassed, and the personal perils he encountered were unequalled by those of any military or naval commander. He was exposed to greater dangers in many battles than any general officer in the field, but when he died his pay died with him. His widow has received no recognition or pension. Most naval officers studiously prepared and presented their prize claims, and some have been enriched with large amounts of prize money. Farragut, in his unselfish patriotism, which called out all his energies and all his time, was neglectful of self and fortune. He never received a dollar of prize money for the conquest of New Orleans, where more extensive captures were made than in any battle of the war. In the day and period when these events took place, Congress and his grateful countrymen cheerfully awarded him their highest honors, but official slight and neglect attended his last days. Notwithstanding official neglect, the American people revere the memory of one of the most truthful, heroic, exemplary, unselfish and devoted patriots the country ever had in its service, and gratefully remember his many signal achievements.

The people of New York adopted Farragut, who came among them to abide the fortunes of the republic. They respected and honored him as first among our heroes while living, and forgetting all differences united in a public demonstration of mournful regard on the reception of his remains, which were brought from Portsmouth for interment. The municipal government of the metropolis gave the great naval chief what the national Government did not, a public funeral. Many of the high dignitaries whose previous neglect had called out expressions of popular disapproval followed in the train on this occasion, and did homage to the man and hero.

It is but a simple duty to Farragut, Du Pont, and Stringham, that their position and their acts in these memorable expeditions, which they respectively commanded, should be rightly recorded; and, in the same connection, the truth in regard to the origin

of each of those enterprises should appear. Had either of them failed, the Navy Department, which projected them, but has received little or no credit for either, would have been held responsible and blamed. But slight of the navy and abuse of the Navy Department were not unusual with partisan writers of the period. Many of the events of that day are misstated and the actors in them wronged and misrepresented. They will, perhaps, never be correctly understood; for besides the Rebellion, which broke up old associations, and aside from interested personal motives which influenced many, there were party and personal animosities and friendships to warp the minds and bias the judgments of most of the writers, who hasten to publish their own partialities and prejudices, which they denominate histories of those occurrences and those times.

Lincoln and Johnson

THEIR PLAN OF RECONSTRUCTION AND THE RESUMPTION OF NATIONAL AUTHORITY

The Johnson Plan of Reconstruction was launched when the President published his North Carolina Proclamation, which set forth easy conditions for the readmission of the former Confederate States into the Union. As a supporter of this plan, Welles here attempts to demonstrate its similarity to Lincoln's scheme of reconstruction. Because of Secretary of War Stanton's collaboration with the radicals, Welles emphasizes Stanton's part in drawing up the original Proclamation.

PART ONE

THE MEASURES adopted by the Government to promote peace and reestablish the Union during the last days of President Lincoln's and the early months of President Johnson's administration, have been much misrepresented, and by many seem to be still imperfectly understood. No change of policy took place, nor was there any interruption in the conduct of public affairs, by the untimely death of Mr. Lincoln and the accession of his successor. Mr. Johnson accepted the situation, and entered upon his duties with an earnest and sincere desire to carry forward to a speedy consummation the plan and intentions of his predecessor for the restoration of the Federal Government to its full constitutional authority, the States each to their rightful position, the

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people to their inherent rights, and the Union to all its strength and beneficence. No full and authentic record has been made of the occurrences of that important period, when the Executive Department was in a transition state and the country was just emerging from a civil war. The day has not perhaps arrived for an impartial history of those times. The resentments which grew out of the war and the partisan strife of the preceding twenty years are interwoven with those occurrences, and still remain to tinge with partiality or prejudice any narrative that may be attempted.

The two Presidents, Lincoln and Johnson, were of dissimilar temperaments, different mental structure, and though associated in the great Union contest and elected on the same ticket, they had been trained in opposing political parties. There were, however, many points in which there was a resemblance. Both were self-made men, neither of them had early educational advantages, both were sons of poverty, each had early struggles to encounter in frontier life to obtain position, and each won the confidence and respect of his associates and the community which knew him best. One was from the prairies of Illinois the other from the mountain region of Tennessee. Both were admired for their kindness of heart, their honest sincerity, their patriotism and incorruptible integrity. Mr. Lincoln had, with much strength of purpose, a genial nature, a facile mind and pliant disposition. Mr. Johnson was reserved but urbane, firm and inflexible in his principles, stern and unbending in maintaining his convictions. While each had the characteristics of frontier men, there was a kindly suavity on the part of Mr. Lincoln which softened and reconciled even those with whom he disagreed; but there was a straightforward and blunt sincerity on the part of Mr. Johnson, of which his opponents took advantage, often to his injury. The early political and party associations of Mr. Lincoln had been with the Whigs. His first vote was for Henry Clay, whose political oratory and magnetic party declamation drew into his support so many of the young men of the West. Led away by impulse rather than reflection, by personal enthusiasm, and not by conviction or much thought on the really grave and profound political questions involved in the conflict of parties, he

drifted into the Whig organization, and commenced political life a nominal centralist, with admiration of the "American System" and of a powerful and magnificent General Government.

Time, reflection, and maturer years tempered his enthusiasm and modified his feelings. He did not wholly relinquish his party obligations, but investigation, discussion, and responsibility had wrought a change in his views. Aside from personal admiration of the eloquent Whig champion, which lingered in his mind a pleasant remembrance, and apart from association which begets attachment, Mr. Lincoln in his later years retained but little zeal for Whig doctrines. When elected, and during his administration, he was sincerely and conscientiously, in feeling and principle, a constitutionalist, a Federal republican, a friend of State rights, and in his general views an opponent of consolidation. Observation and experience made him less a centralist and more a State rights republican than he had been in his earlier days. If the exigencies of the war impelled him to exercise extraordinary and sometimes doubtful powers, he lamented the necessity, and became more and more an admirer of our federative system, and in his convictions an earnest constitutionalist.

During the winter of 1864 and 1865, after Sherman's successful march to the sea and after the fall of Fort Fisher, the expiring days of the Confederacy were manifest and the end not distant. President Lincoln foresaw the result, and anticipated with undisguised satisfaction the time, then rapidly approaching, when the General Government would be able to dispense with the exercise of arbitrary and questionable authority, the States could each and all resume their true position and their rights in the administration and direction of public affairs, and the people again become reconciled, contented, and at peace. In the early months of 1865 he frequently expressed his opinion that the condition of affairs in the rebel States was deplorable, and did not conceal his apprehension that, unless immediately attended to, they would, in consequence of their disturbed civil, social, and industrial relations, be worse after the rebellion was suppressed.

That event was obviously near at hand, and he enjoined upon those who were associated with him in administering the govern-

ment, and occupying stations of responsibility, to be prepared to discharge their novel and important duties intelligently, benignantly, and for the best interests of the country. The impoverishment of the people of those States by a long and exhausting war; the negroes emancipated, but ignorant and incapable of providing for themselves; alienations and difficulties between them and their former masters; new and grave questions between labor and capital, the employer and the employed, the landholder and the landless, the master and the servant; the danger of conflicts between the different classes not only of whites and blacks, but between the rich whites and the poor whites, the free blacks and the late slaves, domestic servants and field hands—these were matters that pressed upon all. The President alluded to them in Cabinet meetings and in private conversations, together with the consequences which in all wars have resulted from the sudden disbandment of great armies, even where there were not domestic and social disturbances and derangements such as existed at the South. In consequence of the insurrection the legal civil governments of the States of the South had been suspended or overthrown, and there must necessarily be a revival and restoration of the old governments, or a reconstruction, by which their interrupted and broken relations with the Union might be reestablished. One of the first movements, therefore, would necessarily be the establishment of civil government in each of the States, so that there should be a legitimate legislature to enact laws, and a legal executive and judiciary to restrain crime, enforce obedience, and preserve civil and social order. Crime, as far as possible, must be prevented and punished; and if on the suppression of the rebellion the armies broke up and portions were enlisted into robber bands and guerilla parties, which he greatly feared, instant measures must be adopted to arrest and punish the offenders. It was essential that these matters should be brought within the scope of the local civil tribunals, and that the people should not depend upon the military to secure and maintain peace and domestic tranquility. Let the people who have been under Confederate despotism learn to take care of themselves under this dispensation, as in former years, and the great principles which underlie

our civil fabric will vindicate themselves without a resort to force and arbitrary power.

He dreaded and deprecated violent and revengeful feelings, or any malevolent demonstrations toward those of our countrymen who were involved, voluntarily or involuntarily, in the rebellion. The leaders, he believed, would flee the country when they became satisfied their cause was hopeless. He often expressed a wish that they might be facilitated in their escape, and no strenuous efforts made to prevent their egress. This was more strongly enjoined upon me, perhaps, than upon any other member of the Cabinet, by reason of the blockade, which was rigidly enforced. In consequence of the fall of Wilmington, ocean communication with the rebels had almost entirely ceased, and escape by water was extremely difficult.

In the latter part of March, about the 22d or 23d of that month, the President left Washington and went to the front. One of the alleged objects in his going was to relieve himself of the immense throng of Congressmen and others which was besetting him for office, at a period when his mind and thoughts were engaged on more important and responsible duties than the mere bestowal of party patronage. The rebellion was drawing to a close, and he anticipated that his visit to army headquarters might be productive of benefits in that regard.

His stay at City Point and with the army was protracted, and attended with some inconveniences to the departments. The Secretary of State went to see him, but promptly returned—the President did not desire the presence of any of his Cabinet. His great object was clemency to the rebels and peace to the country. Shortly after Mr. Seward's return he was thrown from his carriage, and so severely injured as to be unable personally to discharge all of the necessary duties of the Department of State at that interesting crisis.

This accident to the Secretary of State hastened somewhat the President's return. I have reason to suppose, however, that in interviews with Generals Grant and Sherman he had enjoined upon them the concession of liberal terms to the rebels on the first indication of a disposition to yield and abandon the contest. To these merciful and considerate views of the President may be

attributed the liberal terms extended by the conquering generals to Lee and Johnston. Each of our generals was impressed with the humane, generous, and patriotic designs of the President, whose earnest, deepest wish was peace to the people, an early restoration of the national union, and the reestablishment of the States and people in all their original, reserved, and undoubted rights, on terms of equality and justice.

On the 2d of April, while the President was still at the front, he telegraphed that a furious fight was going on, and on the 3d we received intelligence of the fall of Richmond. The information on that and the two succeeding days was, however, meagre and stunted. Mr. Seward, who had been uneasy since his return, read to the Secretary of the Treasury and myself the draft of a proclamation he had prepared for the President to sign, closing the ports of the Southern States. This was a step which I had earnestly pressed at the beginning of the rebellion, as a domestic measure, and more legitimate than a blockade, which was international, and an admission that we were two nations. Within a few months, in fact, from the fall of Fort Fisher, Mr. Seward, who originally opposed this view, had been more favorably inclined, and the result was the proclamation he had prepared and now read to us. After some little discussion and approval, with an admission of the importance of an early promulgation of the document, Mr. Seward proposed that as it was uncertain when the President would return, he should go to Richmond and procure his signature to the paper. Within half an hour after we separated the horses attached to the carriage of the Secretary of State ran away with him, and he received injuries from which he did not recover for many weeks. When restored, great changes had taken place, affecting himself and the country.

The President reached Washington on the evening of Sunday, the 9th of April. When I called on him the next morning he was in excellent spirits, the news of Lee's surrender, which however was not unanticipated, having been received. While I was with him he signed the proclamation for closing the ports, and expressed his gratification that Mr. Seward and myself concurred in the measure, alluding to our former differences.

The President at that time, and while I was with him at the White House, was informed that his fellow-citizens would that evening call to congratulate him on the fall of Richmond and surrender of Lee; but he requested their visit should be delayed that he might have time to put his thoughts on paper, for he desired that his utterances on such an occasion should be deliberate and not liable to misapprehension, misrepresentation, misinterpretation, or misconstruction. He, therefore, addressed the people on the following evening, Tuesday the 11th, in a carefully-prepared speech, intended to promote harmony and union.

In this remarkable speech, delivered three days before his assassination, he stated he had prepared a plan for the re-inauguration of the national authority and reconstruction in 1863, which would be acceptable to the Executive Government, and that every member of the Cabinet fully approved the plan; but he was now censured for his agency setting up and seeking to sustain the State governments, though the Executive claimed no right to say when or whether members should be admitted to seats in Congress. That subject rested exclusively with the respective Houses, and not to any extent with the Executive. Neither he nor his successor seemed disposed at any time to trespass the legislative department of the Government; each department should limit its action within its prescribed constitutional sphere.

There was between the President and most of his Cabinet a cordial concurrence of opinion in regard to the importance of an early restoration of the Union, the reëstablishment of the States in their rights, the exercise of clemency, the inculcation of harmony among the people, and a dismissal of all feelings of revenge or resentment toward the beaten rebels. The proclamation or order of General Weitzel for convening or reassembling the Virginia rebel Legislature was discussed very fully, and it had also been commented upon at the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday. The subject had caused general surprise, and, on the part of some, dissatisfaction and irritation. Mr. Stanton and Mr. Speed were particularly disturbed by it, and I believe Mr. Dennison also. Some, and perhaps all these gentlemen saw and remon-

strated with the President, and individually made known their repugnance to the proceeding. Their decisive opposition, he admitted, was annoying him greatly, and he wished, in an interview with myself, that I would state frankly how the measure struck me. I did not hesitate to tell him I thought the movement questionable; that it did not strike me favorably; that in our desire to bring about an early peace, and to reestablish the political relations which had been suspended for four years, we might make too much haste to accomplish our object satisfactorily. The method and way proposed might retard the measure, and lead the Virginia Legislature, when assembled, to profitless discussion and the adoption of inadmissible terms. He said his object and intentions were to effect a reconciliation as soon as possible, and he should not stickle about forms, provided he could attain the desired result; that he thought it best to meet the rebels as men, fellow-countrymen, who were reasonable and intelligent, and had rights which we were willing and disposed to respect. They had been in error, had appealed to arms, and after having fought well were beaten and humbled. I suggested that as we had never recognized any of their organizations as possessing validity during the war, it would be impolitic, to say the least, to now recognize them and their government as legal and possessed of authority to act. It was a concession which it appeared to me ought not to be made. Besides, when assembled, they might be contumacious and not counsel submission, but conspire to resist still further. There was, moreover, a feeble organization in Virginia, under Pierpont, which we had striven to vitalize and maintain; how could we, with justice to Pierpont and his supporters, recognize another opposing and antagonistic organization? He said he had no fears of any further attempts at resistance by the rebels; they had been too thoroughly whipped and weakened; but there might be something in the other suggestion that we were giving sanction to the rebel organization. He did not himself, however, think much of it. The government under Pierpont, and no other, could be considered legal, but public sentiment or public prejudice must not be overlooked. He had, he said, no thought of treating the rebel Virginia representatives as a legal assemblage—a real Legislature; but

the persons composing that body were leading men in their respective counties, each of whom had a local influence, which he thought should be made available, in this critical transition state, in the interest of peace and the Union. He was surprised that his object and the movement had been so generally misconstrued, and under the circumstances, perhaps, it was best the proceeding should be abandoned. State action in the interest of peace was, however, in itself disintegration and destruction to the Confederacy. He thought it should be encouraged, and was, I perceived, disappointed that his friends opposed the measure, and that I, always recognized by him as a State rights Union man, had not favored it. The very fact of the rebel representatives coming together and dissolving their organization by their own act, after the troops were disbanded, would, in his belief, have a beneficial influence; but he could not, he said, go forward with everybody opposed to him. Civil government must, however, be established as soon as possible in those States when hostilities had ceased; there must be courts, and law, and order, or society would be broken up; the disbanded armies would turn into robber bands and guerilla parties. We had a responsible and he feared a difficult duty to prevent such a state of things.

When I went to the Cabinet meeting on Friday, the 14th of April, General Grant, who had just arrived from Appomattox, was with the President, and one or two members were already there. Congratulations were interchanged, and earnest inquiry was made whether any information had been received from General Sherman. The Secretary of War came late to the meeting, and the telegraph office from which we obtained earliest news was in the War Department. General Grant, who was invited to remain, said he was expecting hourly to hear from Sherman, and had a good deal of anxiety on the subject.

The President remarked that the news would come soon and come favorably, he had no doubt, for he had last night his usual dream which had preceded nearly every important event of the war. I inquired the particulars of this remarkable dream. He said it was in my department—it related to the water; that he seemed to be in a singular and indescribable vessel, but always the same, and that he was moving with great rapidity toward a dark

and indefinite shore; that he had had this singular dream preceding the firing on Sumter, the battles of Bull Run, Antietam, Gettysburg, Stone River, Vicksburg, Wilmington, etc. General Grant remarked with some emphasis and asperity that Stone River was no victory—that a few such victories would have ruined the country, and he knew of no important results from it. The President said that perhaps he should not altogether agree with him but whatever might be the facts, his singular dream preceded that fight. Victory did not always follow his dream, but the event and results were important. He had no doubt that a battle had taken place or was about being fought, “and Johnston will be beaten, for I had this strange dream again last night. It must relate to Sherman; my thoughts are in that direction, and I know of no other very important event which is likely just now to occur.”

Great events did indeed follow. Within a few hours the good and gentle as well as truly great man who narrated his dream was assassinated, and the murder which closed forever his earthly career affected for years, and perhaps forever, the welfare of this country.

The session of the Cabinet on that eventful day, the last of President Lincoln's life, was chiefly occupied on the subject of our relations with the rebels—the communications, the trade, etc. The Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. McCulloch, who had but recently entered upon his duties, was embarrassed in regard to captured cotton, permits, and traffic. It was generally agreed that commercial intercourse with the rebel States should be speedily established. Mr. Stanton proposed that communication should be reopened by his issuing a military order, authorizing and limiting traffic; that the Secretary of the Treasury would give permits to all who wished to trade, and he (Stanton) would order the vessels to be received into any port.

I suggested that instead of a military order from the Secretary of War, the President should issue an Executive order or proclamation for opening the ports to trade, and prescribe therein the duties of the several Departments. Mr. McCulloch expressed his willingness to be relieved from Treasury agents, and General Grant declared himself unequivocally opposed to them

and the whole Treasury system of trading within the rebel lines as demoralizing.

In regard to opening the ports to trade, Mr. Stanton thought it should be attended with restrictions, and that traffic should not extend beyond the military lines. I proposed opening the whole coast to every one who wished to trade, was entitled to coast license, and should obtain a regular clearance. I wished the reëstablishment of unrestricted commercial and social intercourse with the Southern people with as little delay as possible, from a conviction that it would conduce to a more speedy establishment of friendly relations. General Grant concurred with me, and recommended that there should be no restrictions east of the Mississippi. The President referred the whole subject to the Secretaries of the Treasury, War, and Navy, and said he should be satisfied with any conclusions to which they might arrive, or on which they could agree.

At the close of the session Mr. Stanton made some remarks on the general condition of affairs and the new phase and duties upon which we were about to enter. He alluded to the great solicitude which the President felt on this subject, his frequent recurrence to the necessity of establishing civil governments and preserving order in the rebel States. Like the rest of the Cabinet, doubtless, he had given this subject much consideration, and with a view of having something practical on which to base action, he had drawn up a rough plan or ordinance which he had handed to the President.

The President said he proposed to bring forward that subject, although he had not had time as yet to give much attention to the details of the paper which the Secretary of War had given him only the day before; but that it was substantially, in its general scope, the plan which we had sometimes talked over in Cabinet meetings. We should probably make some modifications, prescribe further details; there were some suggestions which he should wish to make, and he desired all to bring their minds to the question, for no greater or more important one could come before us, or any future Cabinet. He thought it providential that this great rebellion was crushed just as Congress had adjourned, and there were none of the disturbing elements of that

body to hinder and embarrass us. If we were wise and discreet, we should reanimate the States and get their governments in successful operation, with order prevailing and the Union re-established, before Congress came together in December. This he thought important. We could do better; accomplish more without than with them. There were men in Congress who, if their motives were good, were nevertheless impracticable, and who possessed feelings of hate and vindictiveness in which he did not sympathize and could not participate. He hoped there would be no persecution, no bloody work, after the war was over. None need expect he would take any part in hanging or killing those men, even the worst of them. Frighten them out of the country, open the gates, let down the bars, scare them off, said he, throwing up his hands as if scaring sheep. Enough lives have been sacrificed. We must extinguish our resentments if we expect harmony and union. There was too much of a desire on the part of some of our very good friends to be masters, to interfere with and dictate to those States, to treat the people not as fellow-citizens; there was too little respect for their rights. He did not sympathize in these feelings. Louisiana, he said, had framed and presented one of the best constitutions that had ever been formed. He wished they had permitted negroes who had property, or could read, to vote; but this was a question which they must decide for themselves. Yet some, a very few of our friends, were not willing to let the people of the States determine these questions, but, in violation of first and fundamental principles, would exercise arbitrary power over them. These humanitarians break down all State rights and constitutional rights. Had the Louisianians inserted the negro in their Constitution, and had that instrument been in all other respects the same, Mr. Sumner, he said, would never have excepted to that Constitution. The delegation would have been admitted, and the State all right. Each House of Congress, he said, had the undoubted right to receive or reject members; the Executive had no control in this matter. But Congress had nothing to do with the State governments, which the President could recognize, and under existing laws treat as other States, give them the same mail facilities, collect taxes, appoint judges, marshals, collectors, etc., subject

of course, to confirmation. There were men who objected to these views, but they were not here, and we must make haste to do our duty before they came here.

Mr. Stanton read his project for reorganizing, reëstablishing, or reconstructing governments. It was a military or executive order, and by it the War Department was designated to reorganize those States whose individuality it assumed was sacrificed. Divested of its military features, it was in form and outline essentially the same as the plan ultimately adopted. This document proposed establishing a military department to be composed of Virginia and North Carolina, with a military governor. After reading this paper, Mr. Stanton made some additional remarks in furtherance of the views of the President and the importance of prompt measures.

A few moments elapsed, and no one else speaking, I expressed my concurrence in the necessity of immediate action, and my gratification that the Secretary of War had given the outlines of a plan embodying his views. I objected, however, to military supervision or control, and to the proposition of combining two States in the plan of a temporary government. My idea, more perhaps than that of any other of the Cabinet, was for a careful observance, not only of the distinctive rights, but of the individuality of the States. Besides, Virginia occupied a different position from that of any other of those States. There had been throughout the war a skeleton organization in that commonwealth which we had recognized. We had said through the whole war that Virginia was a State in the Union—that her relations with the Government were not suspended. We had acknowledged and claimed that Pierpont was the legitimate and rightful Governor, that the organization was lawful and right under him; that the division of the State, which required the assent of the legal State government, had been effected, and was claimed to be constitutional and correct. Were we now to ignore our own acts—to say the Pierpont Government was a farce—that the act creating the State of West Virginia was a nullity? My position on that question was different from others, for though not unfriendly to the new State, I had opposed the division of the State when it took place. The proposition to reëstablish a State

government in Virginia where there was already a State government with which we were acting, with Pierpont as governor, or to put it under military control, appeared to me a grave error. The President said my exceptions, some of them at least, were well taken. Some of them had occurred to him. It was in that view he had been willing that General Weitzel should call the leading rebels together, because they were not the legal Legislature of Virginia, while the Pierpont Legislature was. Turning to Mr. Stanton, he asked what he would do with Pierpont and the Virginia Constitution? Stanton replied that he had no apprehension from Pierpont, but the paper which he had submitted was merely a rough sketch subject to any alteration.

Governor Dennison thought that Pierpont would be no serious obstacle in the way, were that the only difficulty; but there were other objections, and he thought separate propositions for the government of the two States advisable.

I suggested that the Federal Government could assist the loyal government of Virginia in asserting, extending, and maintaining its authority over the whole State, but that we could not supersede or annul it.

The President directed Mr. Stanton to take the document and have separate plans presented for the two States. They required different treatment. "We must not," said he, "stultify ourselves as regards Virginia, but we must help her." North Carolina was in a different condition. He requested the Secretary of War to have two copies of the two plans for the two States made and furnished each member of the Cabinet by the following Tuesday—the next regular meeting. He impressed upon each and all the importance of deliberating upon and carefully considering the subject before us, remarking that this was the great question pending, and that we must now begin to act in the interest of peace. He again declared his thankfulness that Congress was not in session to embarrass us.

The President was assassinated that evening, and I am not aware that he exchanged a word with any one after the Cabinet meeting of that day on the subject of a resumption of the national authority in the States where it had been suspended, or of reëstablishing the Union. I was told by Speaker Colfax that,

in anticipation of a journey to the Pacific, he had come to Washington to learn the intentions of the President in regard to the meeting of Congress, whether he intended to convene that body in extra session; that he was assured by the President he did not contemplate such a step; that he informed Mr. Colfax he might proceed on his journey without hindrance, and parting with him at the portico of the Executive mansion, as he was entering his carriage to go to the theatre, he gave him a message to the miners in Colorado.

On Sunday the 16th of April, after the assassination of President Lincoln, there was a meeting of President Johnson and the Cabinet at ten in the morning at the rooms of the Secretary of the Treasury. The meeting was a protracted one. Mr. Stanton came late and brought with him a mass of papers. Many and important matters were adverted to, and among them the subject of reconstruction. The original draft, he said, had been divided, and the reëstablishment of a State government as directed by Mr. Lincoln was made applicable to North Carolina, while Virginia, with her loyal Governor and government, was to take necessary measures for an election of State officers by the people of the whole State. Mr. Stanton had not, however, copies for the members of the Cabinet at this meeting.

I was invited to the War Department that evening, Sunday the 16th, on some matter of business, by Secretary Stanton, and after that was disposed of I sat by the fire conversing with him, when Senator Sumner, Representatives Dawes and Gooch, and several other gentlemen in pretty rapid succession, entered the room. Messrs. Colfax and Covode were of the number. After a brief general conversation, the Secretary of War took from his desk the Cabinet papers in relation to the government of the rebel States, which, without introductory comment or remark, he proceeded to read. As these were Cabinet papers not yet matured, and had been scarcely discussed—copies of which had not yet been furnished the members—my surprise was great, and it became a question in my own mind whether I was not an intruder. Yet I had been invited there by Mr. Stanton, ostensibly on business. I could not doubt, however, that the other gentlemen came

with an understanding of the object which had called them together, but such was not my case.

After reading the Virginia plan, for a division of the document had been made, and before concluding that which related to North Carolina, Mr. Sumner interrupted the reading and requested Mr. Stanton to stop until he could understand whether any provision was made for enfranchising the colored man. Unless, said he, the black man is given the right to vote, his freedom is mockery.

Mr. Stanton said there were differences among our friends on that subject, and it would be unwise in his judgment to press it in this stage of the proceedings.

Mr. Sumner declared he would not proceed a step unless the black man had his rights. He considered the black man's right to vote the essence—the great essential. He had letters in his pocket from some distinguished foreigners, whom he named, setting forth the subject clearly and emphatically.

Mr. Stanton deprecated the agitation of the subject just at this time as unfortunate.

I availed myself of the interruption caused by the discussion to bid the gentlemen good evening and withdraw. This evidence, on that Sunday evening, that Cabinet measures while yet in embryo and under discussion were subjected to outside criticism and consultation, confirmed an opinion I had long entertained that Cabinet measures were communicated to outside parties, and gave me pain and regret.

Although the subject of the restoration of the States and the Union to their proper constitutional position and rights was a paramount question before the country, it was not alluded to at the regular Cabinet meeting on Tuesday the 18th, nor on any other occasion until after the funeral of President Lincoln. This was perhaps excusable, although measures of less importance received attention. I endeavored to have the subject taken up at the meeting of the Cabinet on Friday the 21st, but the Secretary of War succeeded in getting it passed over then and for several successive meetings. It was not until Friday the 5th of May that it was brought forward. On that day President Johnson,

after a brief discussion, requested the Secretary of War to send copies of the plans to each member of the Cabinet for criticism and amendments, and he ordered a special Cabinet meeting on Monday the 8th of May for their consideration. I received from Mr. Stanton a printed copy of each of the proposed plans, that of Virginia on the 8th, that of North Carolina on the 9th; and still have in my possession the original printed copies of the "Executive order to reëstablish the authority of the United States and execute the laws within the geographical" limits of Virginia and North Carolina, as submitted by him, with the alterations proposed by myself. Most of the emendations or corrections were adopted, and with two exceptions were readily assented to by Mr. Stanton. I preferred a proclamation to an Executive order, as more in character for the Chief Magistrate, more respectful, and less martial.

The first paragraph of Mr. Stanton's draft, which was introductory, was by common consent omitted.

The sixth section, or order, as originally proposed by Mr. Stanton, was the longest and fullest. It gave into the hands of the Secretary of War the whole machinery for organizing civil government for the States, through provost marshals to be by him appointed.

To this delegation of Executive duties and authority to the Secretary of War decisive objection was taken. The subject of reorganizing the State governments and reëstablishing Federal authority in the insurrectionary region, was a matter of the highest responsibility and gravest importance, and could not with propriety be turned over to any one department, but should be reserved for general Administration and Executive action. On this point there was such general concurrence of opinion by all others, that Mr. Stanton, though disappointed, was not persistent in its defence.

The eighth section as proposed by Mr. Stanton read as follows:

Eighth. That to carry into effect the guarantee by the Federal Constitution of a republican form of State government, and afford to them the advantage and security of domestic laws, as well as to complete the reëstablishment of

the authority and laws of the United States, and the full and complete restoration of peace within the limits aforesaid, Francis H. Pierpont, Governor of the State of Virginia, be requested to take measures for the reëstablishment of the State government, and for the election of State officers, with the assurance that the aid of the United States, so far as may be necessary, will be exerted to that end.

I proposed to amend and so modify the section as to assure the existing State authorities of Federal aid in maintaining and extending the administration of the State government throughout the geographical limits of the State, but without ordering a new election or interfering with the State government.

As changed and corrected by me, the section was as follows:

Eighth. That to carry into effect the guarantee by the Federal Constitution of a republican form of State government, and afford the advantage and security of domestic laws, as well as to complete the reëstablishment of the authority and laws of the United States, and the full and complete restoration of peace within the limits aforesaid, Francis H. Pierpont, Governor of the State of Virginia, will be aided by the power of the Federal Government so far as may be necessary, in the lawful measures which he may take for the extension and administration of the State government throughout the geographical limits of said State.

The first rough draft presented to the Cabinet on the 14th of April embodied, as has been stated, a plan for the government of both Virginia and North Carolina under a military governor, and was doubtless the germ of the military reconstruction laws enacted two years later in 1867, which placed the Southern States under military rule. North Carolina and South Carolina formed under those laws the second military district, instead of Virginia and North Carolina, as proposed by Mr. Stanton's first draft. In the differences growing out of the construction of this eighth section may be seen the early dawn, the incipient movement, which was subsequently more fully developed in the controversy between the Executive and Congress in regard to Federal and State rights, the exercise of unlimited central power on the one

hand, and restriction to constitutional limitation and freedom of the people and States on the other. The original eighth section had in view the first step toward the subordination of the States exercising over them arbitrary and absolute control, treating them as provinces, dependent territories, subjugated, and without any of their original inherent and reserved rights as distinct and independent members of the Union. The design was to establish a new State government in Virginia by Federal mandate, when a State government was already there established and in force, ordering a new election of State officers, although the term of the incumbents with whom for years we had been acting had not expired. President Johnson and most of the Cabinet took the ground of non-interference, non-dictation by the Federal Government to a State which was organized, the government of which was republican and had been so treated by us; but as the Federal and State authority had been excluded from a large portion of the State by the insurrection, it was necessary to resume national authority, to reassert the Federal jurisdiction, and to give aid to the State authorities so far as aid might be necessary to enforce State jurisdiction in those localities. Mr. Stanton had, however, after the suggestions on the 14th of April, and under the instructions given him by President Lincoln, so far modified his original plan as to give a qualified recognition to Virginia as a State; but yet by inference she was without a republican form of government, and in such a condition of territorial pupilage as to be considered a mere corporation, subject to the mandatory orders of the Federal Government. The Governor was requested, or in plain language required, ordered, to "take measures for the establishment of the State government and the election of State officers," etc. The subject was not divested of embarrassment, for the government of Pierpont was frail, and those administering it, though loyal, were not the legitimate offspring or choice of a majority of the whole people; but most of the Cabinet approved of the amendment and the President adopted it with a slight verbal alteration. Mr. Stanton assented with unexpected willingness to most of the minor amendments or alterations which I proposed, but yielded on the sixth and eighth sections with some reluctance.

At the close of the discussion he requested that the copies which he had furnished to each member of the Cabinet might be returned to him; and most, perhaps all except myself, complied with his request. As I had proposed the principal if not all the amendments, I desired to retain my copy with the interlineations. Mr. Stanton after a little hesitation acquiesced, but insisted on destroying that part of the sixth section which placed the machinery for reorganizing and reëstablishing the governments of the Southern States in the hands of the Secretary of War. This part of his scheme having been rejected, he claimed it formed no longer any portion of the plan, and with his scissors he cut out the whole section except the first two lines. This copy, thus mutilated, with the amendments interlined, is in my possession, as is also his plan for a temporary government of North Carolina submitted and discussed on the 9th of May. This statement differs in some respects from the testimony of Mr. Stanton, and also that of General Grant, before the Impeachment Committee, when the proceedings of the Cabinet on these points were disclosed. Their statements were from memory, *MINE IS FROM RECORD*. Not only the original plans are now before me, but memoranda of the occurrences which took place, and are the basis of what is related in this paper.

The draft for a provisional or temporary government of North Carolina was considered on Tuesday, the 9th of May. As this was to be the plan or form for the temporary government of the other States which had been in rebellion, preparatory to and in aid of their full and complete restoration, the subject was canvassed with much deliberation. The details prescribed in the Virginia plan, so far as they could be made applicable to North Carolina, were to be followed, and the Secretary of War was directed to furnish copies to each member of the Cabinet embodying the general ideas advanced and approved in the discussions on the 5th and 8th. This plan, as arranged by Mr. Stanton and submitted, was not however in form and manner conformable in all respects to the President's ideas and wishes. The most important point—that which related to the qualified voters, or who should be permitted to take part in the elections—was involved in some obscurity.

Mr. Stanton, in his evidence before the Impeachment Committee, says:

There was one point which I had left open; that was as to who should constitute the electors in the respective States. That I supposed to be the only important point upon which a difference of opinion could arise—whether the blacks should have suffrage in the States, or whether it should be confined, for the purposes of reorganization, to those who had exercised it under the former State laws. I left a blank upon that subject to be considered.

Mr. Stanton committed a mistake when he made this statement. No blank in regard to electors or suffrage was left in his draft for the reestablishment of State governments for the South.

His plan of government for North Carolina submitted on the 9th of May expressly *ordered*: "That the loyal citizens of the United States, residing within the State of North Carolina on the second Tuesday of July next, may on that day, in the several precincts and customary places of holding elections, and between the usual hours, elect members of a State Convention to adopt a State constitution and republican form of State government in said State." I claimed that this was equivocal, that it would lead to controversy, and asked what was meant by "loyal citizens." He admitted the intention was to include negroes as well as white men. To this, serious objection was made by another member, which led to an expression of opinion by each one of the Cabinet present. Mr. Stanton himself objected to any preliminary discussion. There was a kindly feeling on every hand toward the colored race, whose freedom and social condition had been involved in, and in many respects improved by, the results of the War; but a large portion of the people, even in the States loyal to the Constitution, were not prepared to enfranchise or admit negroes to the privilege of being voters. This question as presented in Mr. Stanton's plan being equivocal, or left vague and uncertain, was objected to, as it would lead to controversy and collision. The President wished there might be no room for dispute or equivocation. Mr. Stanton said there were differences on that subject which could not be easily rec-

onciled; perhaps it would be well therefore to meet it and settle it here. He suggested, however, that there should be no discussion, but that each member should say, briefly, whether the negro should be authorized to vote in North Carolina. There is no secrecy in regard to the opinion of the individual members of the Cabinet as declared on that occasion. The result of the meeting and the position of each member were immediately known outside the Administration. Indeed, most of the Cabinet proceedings on that subject and some others of importance were divulged at that period. The Secretary of State was not present, nor am I aware that he was consulted. The Secretary of War, the Postmaster-General, and the Attorney-General declared themselves in favor of giving the negro the privilege of voting by Federal authority in this Executive order. The Secretaries of the Treasury, Navy, and Interior denied that the Federal Government had any authority in the premises, or power to confer this privilege.

But few words were interchanged in regard to public sentiment, etc. I remarked, after each had expressed his opinion, that the subject had been well considered and passed upon by President Lincoln and the Cabinet before issuing the proclamation of December 8, 1863. At that time it was concluded—unanimously I had supposed, Mr. Stanton being one of our number—that the question of suffrage belonged to the States; that the qualification in different States was not uniform; that the Federal Government could not rightfully interfere to make it so; but that all entitled to and accepting of amnesty, who possessed the qualifications prescribed in the constitutions of their respective States prior to the passage of the secession ordinances, could legally vote, and none others. The rule then adopted I thought a correct one, and should be adhered to. Discussion, however, was declined, and the President took the papers without himself expressing at that time an opinion.

It was also stated by Mr. Stanton in his testimony before the Impeachment Committee, that

Subsequently, at an early day, the subject (suffrage) came under consideration, after the surrender of Johnston's army, in the Cabinet of Mr. Johnson. The *project* I had prepared

was printed, and a copy in the hands of each member of the Cabinet, and the President. It was somewhat altered in some particulars, and came under discussion in the Cabinet, the principal point of discussion being as to who should exercise the elective franchise. I think there was a difference of opinion in the Cabinet upon the subject. The President expressed his views very clearly and distinctly. I expressed my views, and other members of the Cabinet expressed their views. The objection of the President to throwing the franchise open to the colored people appeared to be fixed, and I think every member of the Cabinet assented to the arrangement as it was specified in the proclamation relative to North Carolina.

There was an impression—almost an accusation—that President Johnson, by an arbitrary dictum, disposed of this question without deliberation; that he had predetermined it before the subject was taken up in Cabinet meeting. So far is this from the truth, that he forbore to express an opinion, gave the question much careful thought and consideration, and reserved his decision for some days.

General Grant was present, by invitation of President Lincoln, at the Cabinet meeting on the 14th of April, when the first rough draft for reconstruction was read, as stated in his evidence, but not at any other Cabinet meeting when this subject was considered. That draft of the 14th of April was an "Executive order" for the government of Virginia and North Carolina, and a different document from the "North Carolina proclamation" of President Johnson of the 29th of May, although General Grant appears to think it the same. In the draft or plan which General Grant heard read on the 14th of April, no allusion was made to the subject of franchise, for Secretary Stanton was aware that Mr. Lincoln, who was then present, had settled and fixed opinions on that subject, which he had clearly stated in his proclamation of December, 1863. The question of franchise was, however, the prominent topic in the North Carolina proclamation. The draft of the 14th of April also contained a proposition for a military government to reorganize the Southern States, under the direction of the Secretary of War, which is not the fact in

the plan finally adopted by President Johnson. The first was an Executive order, the last was a Proclamation. General Grant was present when the "Executive order" was read in Cabinet council, but never when the North Carolina Proclamation was under consideration. He confounded the two documents, which were in some respects quite dissimilar, though both had in view the reorganization and reestablishment of civil government in the rebel States.

There was a slight diversity in respect to the title which should be given the officer who, under the direction of the President, should initiate proceedings to reestablish civil government, and have charge of affairs in North Carolina until her Constitution was modified and the State in full accord with the General Government. The subject had been previously adverted to. A military man could, it was said, be assigned to the duty, and have a command given him to enforce his orders and make himself respected, and who would be paid from the army appropriation. The precedent which had been set in Tennessee, when Mr. Johnson, the President, had been made a brigadier-general and military governor, was cited. But, on the other hand, it was urged that the war being over, it was desirable to do away with military rule so far as it could be safely dispensed with; that the office and duties were essentially civil, and that it would be desirable, and conducive to harmony, if the person selected should be a citizen of the State not connected with the army, but familiar with the laws and institutions of the people he was to govern, and whose broken relations were to be reestablished. The title of Provisional Governor or Commissioner, was therefore preferred, and that of Provisional Governor, proposed, I think, by Governor Denison, was adopted.

The people had for four years submitted to the exercise of extraordinary, almost unlimited military power, and on the cessation of hostilities good and wise men not connected with the army were anxious to relieve the country of military rule. This was the prevailing feeling of the Administration, and many of the army officers concurred in that feeling. The title of Provisional Governor for the person to be employed to adjust those affairs was, therefore, generally approved. On the question of

Negro suffrage, however, there were irreconcilable differences in the Republican party, which had then already disclosed themselves in the Senate on the Louisiana question and other measures, and these differences were increasing in Congress and throughout the country. Many who felt indifferent on the subject so far as the negro was concerned, denied nevertheless the power of the Federal Government to give the black race the privilege or right to vote or to prevent them from voting; claimed that it violated the foundation principles on which our governmental superstructure was built; that the subject belonged to the States exclusively. But there was a fanaticism with others, who in their zeal appeared to consider the cause of liberty and free government involved in the enfranchisement of the blacks, and were ready in pursuit of this one idea to sacrifice constitutional limitations and safeguards, and constitutional government, to secure to that race the privilege of suffrage. Instead of a privilege conferred and regulated by law and constitutional rules, the Radicals, as they began to call themselves, insisted that suffrage was and is an inherent and inalienable right. The condition of the country, just recovering from a civil war which had its origin in the aggressive demands of slavery, and claims in its behalf not warranted by the Constitution, conduced to the growth of public sentiment in the opposite extreme, scarcely less reprehensible, in favor of the blacks and against their rebel masters. While the fanatics—I do not apply the word offensively—were earnest and sincere, there was another class of shrewd and managing partisans who allied themselves to the movement, but were governed by less honest motives and had less honest convictions. The people, North and South, were weary of war and wished for peace; but there were extreme men in each section who had an object in perpetuating differences. This question of negro suffrage, together with proscription of the Southern whites, soon became a party test, and with it came in the old distinctions in regard to State rights and central power.

Lincoln and Johnson

THEIR PLAN OF RECONSTRUCTION AND THE RESUMPTION OF NATIONAL AUTHORITY

The break between President Johnson and Congress on the question of reconstruction overshadowed his entire administration. Welles here continues his account of the origins of the President's policy and seeks to put all the blame for the breach upon the radicals. The Secretary's account of their efforts to induce the President to call Congress into special session as late as July, 1865, is especially interesting.

PART TWO

THE MEASURE of reconstruction involved principles which, from the origin of the Government, have divided public sentiment and led to the organization of opposing parties. The question presented was whether the people of the States which had been in rebellion had sufficient intelligence and virtue to resume their rights and exercise the duties and authority of local self-government, or whether they should by central power be denied these privileges and rights, and subjected to military domination. Distrust of popular government had always existed to a considerable extent, and those who were of that faith were unwilling, now that the power was in their hands, to permit the people of North Carolina and other Southern States to frame their own governments, make their own organic laws, and govern themselves. Neither President Lincoln nor President Johnson

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had any such distrust, nor would they consent to exercise arbitrary power on the rights of the States or our established federal system of State equality. The subject had been considered without prejudice or party bias, long before the rebellion was suppressed. The plan of reconstruction which President Lincoln initiated is clearly set forth in the annual message of December 8, 1863, and the accompanying Proclamation of that date. In those documents the people of the States in insurrection are invited to resume their lawful position in the Union, and are assured that when they—the people of any State—may do so, and “shall reestablish a State government which shall be republican,” such shall be recognized as the true government of the State, and the State shall receive thereunder the benefits of the constitutional provision which declares that, “the United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union, a republican form of government, and shall protect each of them.” This policy, which is constitutional, and was announced by President Lincoln with the approval of his cabinet in 1863, received the sanction of the country, and was adopted and carried forward by President Johnson in 1865. The Secretary of War manifested a desire to continue military ascendancy after the overthrow of the Confederacy. In consultation with his confidants in Congress he proposed by an executive order to abandon the principles laid down by Mr. Lincoln in regard to suffrage, and without warrant from the Constitution, and in derogation of the rights of the States, to authorize the negroes to vote in the elections.

President Johnson modified essentially Mr. Stanton’s draft for the temporary government of North Carolina, put the document in the form of a Proclamation instead of an Executive order, and made it more distinctly a civil than military paper. In that respect it was a great improvement on the original and on the Virginia draft. He did not issue the proclamation appointing the Provisional Governor and establishing a temporary government in North Carolina until the 29th of May. The disputed question of suffrage he carefully weighed and investigated, reviewed the whole subject, and while, like Mr. Lincoln, he felt as a man kindly disposed toward the colored race, and would have been gratified even to give them qualified suffrage if were they

possessed of capacity, like President Lincoln he came to the conclusion that the subject belonged exclusively to the States and the people of the States respectively, and that the Federal Government had no legal power or legitimate control over it. The rebels by their own acts had individually forfeited their rights as citizens, and might each be excluded from participating in the Government unless pardon or amnesty was granted. Amnesty might be qualified and conditional. It was admitted to be in the power of the Executive, by a limited pardon, to exclude from suffrage certain criminal whites, but neither the President nor the Federal Government had authority to admit to suffrage any blacks. By excluding those who had been in rebellion he had the power, if disposed to exercise it, to gratify to that extent the intolerant feeling which sought to proscribe the Southern whites; but while he might so far restrict suffrage, and thereby had measurable control, he yet had no authority to establish new qualifications for voting, or to confer on minors, or females, or blacks, the privilege of electors, in opposition to the fundamental laws of the States respectively. By withholding a full pardon he might exclude traitors from voting, but he was invested with no authority to confer suffrage on any person or class, in derogation or violation of the local fundamental law of any State. Nor had the President nor the whole Federal Government any authority, constitutional or equitable, to break down sovereign communities, or deprive the loyal, law-abiding, patriotic citizens of those States of their reserved civil, municipal, and political rights. And, as punishment should not precede but follow conviction, rebels themselves were entitled to a fair and impartial trial before being condemned, outlawed, and punished for crime. His investigations and reflections led him, in his North Carolina proclamation, to adopt the principle, and almost the very words, of President Lincoln in 1863. He said:

In any election that may be hereafter held for choosing delegates to any State Convention, as aforesaid, no person shall be qualified as an elector, or shall be eligible as a member of such convention, unless he shall have previously taken the oath of amnesty as set forth in the President's proclamation of May 29, A.D. 1865, and is a voter qualified

as prescribed by the laws and Constitution of the State of North Carolina in force immediately before the 20th day of May, 1861, the date of the so-called ordinance of secession; and the said Convention when convened, or the Legislature that may be thereafter assembled, will prescribe the qualifications of electors and the eligibility of persons to hold office under the Constitution and laws of the State, a power the people of the several States composing the Federal Union have rightfully exercised from the origin of the Government to the present time.

The words of President Lincoln in his proclamation of the 8th of December, 1863, proposing the reestablishment of legal governments in the rebel States, are, "being a qualified voter by the election laws of the State existing immediately before the so-called act of secession"; and in the same proclamation he suggests that "the Constitution and the general code of laws as before the rebellion he maintained, subject only to the modifications made necessary by the conditions hereinbefore stated." These conditions related to confiscation, emancipation, and other acts originating in and growing out of the rebellion.

The rule and principles set forth had been carefully and elaborately examined and discussed by the members composing the Executive Administration in 1863, and upon their unanimous approval had been adopted and proclaimed by President Lincoln. Three of the members of President Lincoln's Administration in 1863 were in the Cabinet of President Johnson in May, 1865, two of whom are understood to have advised an adherence to the rule laid down in 1863. President Johnson agreed with them as to the correctness and legality of the principle, and made it his rule of action in reestablishing loyal governments. There was therefore no change of policy in 1865, on the part of the Administration, from the policy of 1863 in that regard. The views of President Lincoln and President Johnson were identical; yet an organized opposition was immediately commenced against President Johnson for the honest and conscientious discharge of his constitutional duty, which pursued him with vindictive and unrelenting ferocity during his whole Administration, and malignantly and without cause or justification at-

tempted his impeachment. Other pretexts, frivolous and false, were assigned, but the real and true cause of assault and persecution was the fearless and unswerving fidelity of the President to the Constitution, his refusal to proscribe the white people in the rebel States and the States themselves by *ex post facto* laws, his opposition to central Congressional usurpation, and his maintenance of the rights of the States and of the Executive Department of the Government against legislative aggression. Of the manner in which he met his assailants, and the wisdom of all that was said and done on either side during that extraordinary conflict—which was carried on by a fragment of Congress that arrogated to itself authority to exclude States and people from their constitutional right of representation, against an Executive striving under infinite embarrassments to preserve State, Federal, and Popular rights, to restore peace and promote national union—it is unnecessary to speak at this time, further than to say that his motives were as pure as the principles which governed both him and Abraham Lincoln were constitutional and correct.

In this matter of extending suffrage to the colored race and of proscription of the whites, the President and most of his Cabinet were opposed to any and all oppressive measures, and to any general subversion of the laws, usages, institutions, traditions, and customs of the States respectively, excepting so far as to rid them of slavery, the radical error which had caused our national trouble and led to the arbitrament of arms. That had been by common consent on both sides in issue, and was determined by the war. Emancipation was in issue; negro suffrage was not. That was an afterthought—a new contest, introduced after hostilities had ceased, and terms had been granted and accepted. The doctrine, recognized throughout the civilized world, that all laws not inconsistent with those of the conquerors remain in force till changed to the conquered, the centralists would not concede to the Southern States, composed of people who were their countrymen, living under the same Constitution, and, like themselves, amenable to existing Federal laws. They were sheltered by no treaty, and were denied the legal rights guaranteed by the Constitution to all citizens. Had the war been carried on

with a foreign power, there would have been peace when hostilities ceased and the conquered party had submitted and accepted terms; but such was not the case in this instance. The defeated States were protected by no treaty, and the conquerors refused to recognize or be governed by existing laws towards the conquered. American citizens who resided at the South during the rebellion were not allowed the rights conceded to aliens if they continued to reside in that section. Leading minds in Congress and the country exerted their influence to prevent harmony and reconciliation. Hatred and revenge were cherished and inculcated towards all indiscriminately who lived in the rebel States, whether they had been actors or not, willing or involuntary, Union men or otherwise. While the Radicals did not propose to hang or imprison all, or perhaps any considerable portion, of the Southern people, all who continued to reside within the limits of any of the rebel States were to be unrepresented, to be classed as rebels, and robbed of their rights. Their fidelity to the Union during the war, and their surrender and submission, were not sufficient; the white people, loyal and disloyal, who continued to reside South, were denied rights reserved and secured to them by the fundamental law—rights inherent in the people of each State as distinct communities, and which were never ceded away, granted to or conferred upon the Federal Government, or in any manner parted with. All were subjected to arbitrary military rule, no further restrained under the laws which Congress proceeded to enact than the military commander placed over them might, in his own voluntary pleasure, tolerate and permit. It was a war against States as much as against persons, for not one of the thousands who fled into the Northern States was disfranchised or molested. There seemed an unreasoning fanaticism on the subject of the rights and privileges of the colored race with some, who in their zeal persuaded themselves that the cause of liberty was with the negro, not with the white man. Negro suffrage and negro supremacy over the whole South became with these men the one great absorbing idea. Others less sincere than the fanatics, but who had party, personal, and mercenary ends in view, and central principles to promote, allied themselves with the fanatics against

the President, in the confident expectation that, by the aid of negro votes, the party of centralists would secure and maintain ascendancy in the General Government. This party, which soon assumed the name of Radical, scouted at all legal restraints upon their schemes against the States and against white men, and did not hesitate to disregard and break down all constitutional barriers which were in their way, although but few had the frankness of their chief leader, Thaddeus Stevens, to declare they were independent of and outside the Constitution.

Senator Sumner called on me on the 10th of May, the day after the Cabinet had taken action declining to interfere with suffrage. No direct mention of that action was made, but the question in its general aspect was discussed, and I was satisfied he had been informed of the opinions given. He was very earnest and sincere in urging the absolute necessity of permitting or not denying to the colored race the franchise. Voting, he claimed, was indispensable to freedom; without it the blacks had gained nothing—servitude, slavery in another form would be imposed upon them by the privileged or master race. Their admission to civil rights, the establishment of the marriage relation, the unity of the family which could no longer be forcibly separated by any master against their will—points which I mentioned as secured to them by the war—he treated as of little consequence without suffrage. In the course of the conversation he said that Chief Justice Chase had left on a visit to the rebel States for the purpose of promoting the cause of negro suffrage, and that President Johnson was aware of his object and favored it.

As the President had forborne to express his opinion on the 9th, when he took the papers and dismissed the Cabinet council, not unlikely there was at the time an impression, perhaps an expectation with some, that he would favor negro suffrage. He would not, I was confident and so stated, have opposed it, had any State adopted or proposed to adopt it. On the contrary, he was kindly disposed, and I think personally favorable to qualified negro suffrage, when there were evidences of capacity sufficient on the part of the colored man to discharge the duty intelligently. But that the Federal Government had any power or authority to dictate or control the States on this subject, was

an idea he never entertained. He was too faithful to the Constitution, too strict a constructionist, too firm an advocate of State rights, had too profound a regard for our system of State and Federal governments based on popular rights, to interfere with the States in this matter.

Mr. Sumner did not controvert, but rather assented to my exposition of what I believed were President Johnson's views, but he put in a remark indicating that the popular voice and popular rights included the negro race. This, I claimed, would be a new dispensation from the central Government, which had no authority to give or order it. Although no direct mention was made of the opinions expressed in the Cabinet, I was impressed with the belief that Senator Sumner had been advised in regard to what had taken place, and that his statements of the expedition of the Chief Justice, its object, and that the President approved of it, were intended, as well as his own remarks, to have an influence on that subject.

In a conversation with Senator Sumner the following December, referring to the secret meeting which took place at the War Department on the Sunday evening succeeding the assassination of President Lincoln, he said that he and Colfax interpolated a paragraph on the subject of suffrage into the Executive Order that Mr. Stanton had prepared, which Stanton accepted. This paragraph, which has been already quoted in a preceding paper, was, he said, satisfactory to him and those who agreed with him, but that Seward, McCulloch, and myself had upset the arrangement and were responsible for all the consequences. This paragraph, which Messrs. Sumner and Colfax interpolated on the 16th of April, was not in the first rough draft submitted to the Lincoln Cabinet on the 14th of April, the only occasion when General Grant was present while the subject of a provisional or military government for North Carolina was under consideration. He was never present with President Johnson's Cabinet when the subject was considered. Mr. Stanton was mistaken when he represented that he left a blank on the subject of suffrage in his North Carolina draft. I have that draft as he presented it, and there is no such blank. I have quoted the paragraph re-

specting loyal citizens and elections which Messrs. Sumner and Colfax prepared, and which was submitted for approval.

General Grant was in error in supposing he was present when the North Carolina Proclamation was read in Cabinet. He was not present on that occasion, but was in attendance when the first Executive Order was submitted.

It is also worthy of observation that Messrs. Sumner and Colfax and others took no exception to the plan or policy of reconstruction instituted by President Lincoln and adopted by President Johnson; but they, with Mr. Stanton, undertook to assist the President, and shape and perfect the Executive Order to meet their peculiar views. When, however, President Johnson declined, as President Lincoln had declined, to intermeddle with the subject of suffrage, he was accused of "high crimes and misdemeanors" for the steps which he had taken to reconstruct the States and resume the national authority.

On the 24th of May I saw for the first time the proclamation for establishing government in North Carolina, with the programme as revised by the President and finally published on the 29th. It was in some essentials different from Mr. Stanton's draft, and was a more finished and complete document in every respect than when it passed into the President's hands. The promulgation in the form of a Proclamation was preferable to that of an Executive or military order, which had been proposed in the first draft, and was in fact applied to Virginia.

Almost immediately after the proclamation for amnesty, which was issued on the 29th of May, simultaneously with the proclamation for establishing a provisional government in North Carolina, preliminary to the complete restoration of the State to the Union, opposition to these measures began to be developed. The people North and South, with great unanimity, acquiesced in and approved these steps of the Executive and the policy thus indicated, but discontent began to be manifested, angry expressions were uttered, and combinations entered into by a class of active and leading party men of extreme views, who were not willing that the desolation of war should be so soon

forgotten and its spirit allayed. The same men had denounced the mild and lenient policy of President Lincoln and opposed his reelection.

Foremost among them as a master spirit and avenger—not a restorer—and moving with subtle skill and effect, was Henry Winter Davis of Maryland. Although of abilities superior in many respects to any man in Congress for the work in hand, and possessed of a keen, suggestive, and intriguing mind, with variable and salient powers, which could devise schemes and excite his associates to their execution, he failed to win and hold the confidence of the people. But few even of his most intimate friends, while listening to his eloquent suggestions, gave him implicit trust. Conspicuously and energetically beyond any other man, he came forward at this period as the leader and oracle of the Radical party, the champion of negro suffrage and of the equality of the races—the opponent of State rights, and the open advocate of the omnipotent imperialism of Congress and the central Government. He had not been a favorite of Mr. Lincoln and most of his Cabinet, and he knew full well they did not desire his return to Congress. Aware of these facts, and that a considerable portion of the Republicans of Baltimore as well as all the Democrats of his district were opposed to him, he feared to stand as a candidate for reelection, and had reluctantly declined and retired from the contest the preceding fall. But his ambition, his extreme radicalism, and his hostility to the mild and benignant policy of Mr. Lincoln and his Administration, had not abated. The death of the President wrought no change of feeling in Davis, for the same Cabinet remained, the same clemency was being exercised, and the same policy was pursued as under Mr. Lincoln, with even a more studied observance of the rights of the States. He was therefore among the very first to manifest opposition to President Johnson and his policy, aggravated in his mind because it was a continuation of the policy of Mr. Lincoln.

Before the close of the month of June, Senator Wade and Thaddeus Stevens, acting in concert with Davis, and who, like him, had been opposed to the renomination and election of Mr. Lincoln, repaired to Washington. Wade was much under

the influence of the Baltimore Radical, whose genius he admired, and between whom and himself there was coincidence of opinion on most of the political questions of the period. Although acting in concert, the mental structure of the two men was widely different. Wade, rugged and less cultivated than Davis, had vastly greater influence, for his rough and honest sincerity, though sometimes astray, begat confidence and respect, while propositions originating in the scheming and intriguing mind of Davis generally required indorsement. In allying himself to the Ohio Senator Davis exhibited shrewdness, but the alliance was at the expense of Wade, whose Presidential aspirations had, however, begun to warp his judgment, which, with his violence against President Lincoln and his measures, contributed to undermine his standing and influence with the public.

Acting under an honest and friendly impulse, Wade was unwilling to surrender Johnson, whom he respected, and indulged hopes that the President might be brought into the views of the Radicals. But Davis, more shrewd and sagacious, and looking much deeper into subjects and their results, as well as into the character of individuals, had no such expectation. He therefore paid no court to Johnson, whose principles and adamant integrity he knew were firmly fixed. For several days in June Wade danced attendance on the President while holding converse with Davis, Thaddeus Stevens, and others, and earnestly besought him to convene Congress—a step which was ardently pressed by the Radicals from all quarters. It was made plain by their own arguments that they wished Congress in session, not to promote union, but to prevent it; not to conform to the great requirements of the Constitution, but to disregard them; not to harmonize public opinion, but to prolong hostile feelings.

Mr. Lincoln had fathomed and well understood these men and their purposes, and hence under no circumstances would he have convened Congress, where malevolent intrigues and factious designs could be fostered and have effect. The centralizing, usurping, unconstitutional purposes of the Radical leaders he deprecated; and they, knowing his opposition to their ultra schemes, had endeavored to prevent his nomination and reelection in 1864.

It began to be intimated by the leading Radicals, and was soon given out by them that Henry Winter Davis would, in an oration which he was to deliver on the 4th of July at Chicago, enunciate the policy which the Federal Government must adopt, and it was understood to be fundamentally different from that which President Lincoln had initiated and President Johnson was pursuing. Suffrage was to be given to the negroes by the Federal Government; proscription was to be the doom of the rebel whites; death was to be the fate of the State governments. Until there was a radical reconstruction of the government, the people in the States that had participated in the rebellion were to be allowed no representation or any voice in the public councils, whatever might be their claims under constitutional guarantees. Emancipation of the blacks was not sufficient; the rebel whites were to be subjugated and politically enslaved. Congress was to take these subjects in hand, regardless of the Constitution; and if President Johnson would not at once convene that body in order to consummate these great ends, they were to receive immediate attention, at the regular session in December, from Wade, Stevens, and their associates.

Senator Wade did not until the last moment relinquish the hope that he could persuade President Johnson it was his duty to assemble Congress forthwith, and consult that branch of the Government on the subject of reconstruction and the resumption of the national authority. In two or three interviews which he had with me in the latter part of June, he admitted he was beginning to be discouraged, and I could perceive he was quite desponding. On one of these occasions I expressed my views freely, and stated that I could not see what Congress had to do with the State governments, unless they were anti-republican. The rebels had laid down their arms and submitted to law and the results of the war which had extinguished slavery; peace prevailed throughout the region which had been in insurrection; the pardoning power was with the President; the States and the people of the South had their rights under the Constitution; it was for the best interest of the country that those rights should be recognized, and the broken relations of the communities speedily mended, and the Union restored. No legislation on the part of

the Federal Government was needed to secure this end; the Executive and the people could accomplish it. Each House of Congress had the undoubted constitutional right and authority to judge of the qualifications of its own members—to admit, to refuse to admit, or to expel any one; but they possessed no power to deprive any of the States of their rights, or to forbid the people to frame, revise, and modify their Constitutions.

Senator Wade declared his unqualified dissent from these views; complained that the Executive had the control of the Government; that the other departments were subordinate and powerless; said, on the whole, our form of government was a failure; that there are not three distinct and independent departments, but one great, absorbing, and controlling one, which had two others as assistants.

Thaddeus Stevens, who with other Radicals had been in consultation with Henry Winter Davis, called to see me on the 30th of June, and made some sarcastic hits at the President and most of his Cabinet. He expressed his contempt for State rights; and for any steps which would place the rebels on terms of equality with loyal men, his indignation was unutterable. Only boys, he said, ignorant of their duty, or men as incompetent as boys, destitute of all statesmanship, could think of reëstablishing the rebel States, and admitting them and the rebels to participate in the Government with the same rights as ourselves.

When I spoke of constitutional obligations, he said constitutional obstructions; they were impediments to progress. We had, he averred, outgrown the garments made and put on in 1789. They did not fit us. The men who manufactured the Constitution had given us but a piece of patchwork at best. They did not like it themselves in some respects, but it was the best they could do under the then existing circumstances. They were very good men, and wise for the times in which they lived. We, however, belonged to a later age, a more advanced civilization, and were blockheads if we could not improve on their work. One of their mistakes had been almost fatal to us as a nation; had brought upon us civil war. It was an absurdity for us to attempt to go along, broken up into fifty different States or corporations; we must be more compact, have a nationality, and get rid of the

ridiculous theories and fanciful notions that we were thirty or fifty different sovereignties.

John Slidell, the subtle and managing secessionist, had views not dissimilar to Stevens's of the Constitution, and as little reverence for it and for popular government. Each considered the Constitution an imperfect instrument, not adapted to the expanded limits, great resources, and power of the country, or to the changes and advances which modern improvements had made. Slidell maintained the right of any State to secede or withdraw from the Union. Stevens denied the right of secession, but insisted that the central Government could expel or exclude any State from the benefits of the Union or participation in the government. If these extremes did not meet in their conclusions, either scheme carried into effect would be subversive of the Constitution; each was revolutionary.

The oration of Davis at Chicago proved to be what his party associates had predicted it would be—the radical programme of the Republican party. It was a skilful, eloquent, and able exposition of Radical intentions, and of the policy which the Government should in the view of his sect pursue. There must be no attempt to conciliate differences, no reconciliation, no clemency; the white people of the South were not to be treated as our equals; the negro was to be elevated. The constitutions, governments, and traditions of the States of the South were not to be respected. The State governments were dead, and the people there had no rights but such as the dominant party chose to give them. He said:

The way to preserve the bond of peace is not by compromise or concession, or by friendly proposals. Who does not know that the negro is a man? State rights are responsible to the bayonet. Those great organizations that insolently lifted their arms in the front of battle against the nation, where are they now? that Virginia, the Old Dominion, etc. Pierpont was created her master at the bidding of national necessity, and because the nation required that the old government of Virginia should cease to exist. States are immortal, but State governments that are organized by men, and may be used for selfish purposes, perverted to the pur-

poses of treason to defy the Union, are, by the laws of the United States, not immortal, but amenable to the laws as men, and die by treason.

They have suffered, and suffered much, by the confiscation of their slaves; the next best punishment is to deprive them of the rights of citizenship.

I am no enthusiast. I am very little of a philanthropist. I have no supreme love of the intellectual superiority of the negro over the white, but I know his vote is important, and if I have not much respect for justice and humanity, I have for the five-twenties. I have great respect for the integrity of the Government and the possibility of carrying on its machinery, and if their Constitution does not give the mass of negroes the right of voting on equal terms with the loyal white man, the safety of the nation requires, republican principles require, that no such government shall be recognized as republican in form, that no Representative or Senator from such a State shall be admitted to either House, or even complimented with the privilege of the floor. We need the votes of all the colored people; it is numbers, not intelligence, that counts at the ballot-box; it is right intention, not philosophic judgment, that casts the vote.

Let them (Congress) pass by their two-thirds majority, in both Houses of Congress, an amendment of the Constitution, securing forever the mass of the people as the basis of the republican government of the United States, and submit it, this very coming winter, before the Legislatures adjourn, for their confirmation.

Such were some of the utterances of the ablest Radical leader—their oracle, and boldest and most skilful manager—who placed himself in antagonism to the peaceful, constitutional, and unanimous policy of Presidents Lincoln and Johnson. Enfranchisement of the negroes, disfranchisement of the whites, death to State governments and States rights, exclusion of the rebel States from representation in the Senate, or of the people in the House, amendment of the Constitution by snap judgment, etc., were the Radical doctrines.

Most of that small combination of Radicals who concocted the plan which Davis proclaimed at Chicago had been opposed

to the reëlection of Mr. Lincoln, and were avowedly hostile to his ideas of clemency, general amnesty, and a restoration of the Union on the Federal basis of a political equality of the States. Henry Winter Davis was the prime mover and actual leader of this Radical combination, which in the summer of 1865 laid down the chart that, by caucus machinery, guided and governed that party in after years. He possessed intellectual vigor, culture, grasp, and comprehension, which inspired and subordinated Wade, and was endowed with physical as well as mental ability and activity, that gave him advantages over Stevens, who had, perhaps, as suggestive, fertile, and adroit a mind. Stevens, however, was infirm from age, was deformed, and a cripple. Davis moved on for a time, the pioneer of the Radicals in their war upon the Administration. But this rising genius was stricken down at the commencement of what he and his friends anticipated was to be a brilliant and successful career. He died of fever at Baltimore in December. His early death was severely felt by his Radical associates, who resorted to extraordinary means to embalm his memory and give strength to the political views he had promulgated, and which became the text-book and guide of his party.

Congress, when it assembled, passed resolutions of respect for Abraham Lincoln, and measures were taken for an official observance of the national bereavement. Mr. Stanton, Secretary of War, was selected to pronounce a eulogy on the murdered President. But the Radical leaders, who were opposed to President Lincoln and his policy, were determined the occasion should not pass without a similar official Congressional demonstration to their selected and brilliant leader, Henry Winter Davis, notwithstanding he died of fever in Baltimore, a private citizen. He had been the master spirit, the leading Radical opponent of the policy of the late and present Presidents; his followers, having the control of Congress, resolved on an apotheosis to Davis, and that the same official tokens of respect, the same Congressional honors and observances which were rendered the murdered Lincoln, should be awarded to the Radical, Davis. Mr. Stanton, who respected Lincoln, but was nevertheless in strong sympathy with the Radicals, became embarrassed by these

intrigues, hesitated, and finally declined to deliver the eulogium on the deceased President. George Bancroft, unconnected with the Lincoln Administration, was selected as his substitute.

The eulogy on Mr. Lincoln was delivered in the hall of the House of Representatives on the 12th of February, the anniversary of his birth. Congress adjourned for that purpose.

J. A. J. Creswell, at that time a Senator from Maryland, now Postmaster-General, was chosen to deliver an oration before the Government and two Houses of Congress, in commemoration of Davis, the Radical leader. The day selected for this singular and unprecedented proceeding as regards a private citizen, who was no public benefactor and had no public reputation save that of a mere political partisan, was the 22d of February, the anniversary of the birth of Washington. The solemnities and observances were the same in form as for President Lincoln, to whose policy he was opposed. The Representatives' Hall, in the Capitol of the nation, was the place of these obsequies. The hall was draped with crape, flags, and all the insignia and emblems of mourning that had been bestowed on the deceased President, and no effort was spared by Congress to give this Radical leader who was a private citizen of Baltimore the same official honor and respect that were shown to the Chief Magistrate of the nation, who had been assassinated while in the public service.

But few, comparatively, sympathized with the violent Radicals at the beginning of their opposition to peaceable reconstruction. Tired of "war and all its horrid cost," its calamities and abuses, devoted to the Union, and earnestly desiring reconciliation and peace, the masses were, like Mr. Lincoln and his successor, for conciliation and the restoration of friendly feelings. But the expression of these sentiments subjected those Republicans who uttered them to sneers and assaults from Radical partisans. The men who advocated clemency, union, and peace, were denounced as in alliance with Copperheads, as rebel sympathizers, not truly loyal, men of unsound principles. In the party organizations and elections they were stigmatized as traitors, disloyal or suspected persons, who could not be trusted, and the Radicals of the party declared they would not vote for such candidates. The consequence was that good and calm patriotic Republicans were pro-

scribed, and aspiring politicians of the Republican party feared to exercise moderation or express Union opinions. Hate and revenge toward the South became tests of political orthodoxy, and in nearly every district in the North only such persons as would vilify the President and denounce the South were selected as candidates by the Republican party organizations.

The extreme men of the South were in some localities as rash, unreasonable, and impracticable as the Radicals of the North, and for a time gave the Administration scarcely less embarrassment. War and defeat had not extinguished that supercilious arrogance which they whimsically called "chivalry," and had cherished for a generation. These pupils of nullification hastened to press forward into prominent positions, State and national, some of the most conspicuous and offensive rebels. It was a feeble exhibition of the sense, or want of sense, of nullifying chivalry. The mild and generous policy of the Administration they misconstrued and abused, and the old party feeling and sectional animosity which had prevailed before the war were revived, and received encouragement by lenity. Intimations and suggestions that slavery would be established under another form, that the blacks should be allowed no civil rights, that the rate of wages should be regulated by law, that negroes should own no real estate, and other as unjust and wrongful propositions, were thrown out, and in some communities were sanctioned. It was declared, moreover, that the South by a united representation of secessionists in Congress, in alliance with the Democrats of the North, would have a controlling majority, and that thus, by party political action, they would achieve what they had been unable to accomplish by arms, and in this way the "Lost Cause" would be eventually triumphant.

These indirect schemes and inconsiderate threats and proceedings were just such materials to provoke the popular mind as the Radicals desired, and they availed themselves of them with effect. Nor were the more violent Democrats—those who were stigmatized as Copperheads for a time—wise and judicious in many respects, but gave force to Radical schemes by boasting that the Democratic party, by Southern aid, would soon be in the ascendant. They openly admitted that they had more regard

for the secessionists than for the Radicals, and would readily, when they had opportunity, coalesce with them. In some instances repudiation of the war debt was threatened, so soon as they could obtain power; and it was claimed by some that the rebel war debt had equal merit with that of the Government. The spirit of party, which, carried to excess, often undermines and destroys the judgment, and incapacitates bodies of men from acting wisely and well, stimulated the violent and rash Radicals, Secessionists, and Copperheads alike against the Administration. In their zeal for party, the extremists were forgetful of country. Faction fortified and strengthened itself at the expense of the Constitution and good government.

There was but little difficulty on the part of the Radicals in creating alarm and exciting the apprehensions of the Union men, who had not yet recovered from the war feeling, nor had they entirely overcome the resentment which the causeless rebellion had provoked. Every hamlet, and almost every household, mourned the loss of brave and devoted men, who had given their lives to put down the rebellion and maintain the integrity of the Union. The memory of the departed, and the recollection of their own sacrifices and sufferings, were aroused by the appeals and representations which the Radicals made of the danger of a coalition between the Copperheads, who had been indifferent to their calamities, and the Secessionists who had caused them. Instead of denying or counteracting these representations, or taking any measures to defeat their effects, many of the Democratic presses and leaders, by their bold defiance, their boastful claim of anticipated party ascendancy, and their threat that there was to be a change and reversal of measures and policy, contributed to strengthen the Radical movements.

Both extremes, North and South, by these ultra views, thwarted and embarrassed the Administration in its efforts to re-establish the State governments and restore the Union; but they were actuated by opposite motives. The South, discouraged, impoverished, and subdued, was recovering from the delusions of Quixotic chivalry, and beginning to revive and become hopeful, and gradually gave its confidence to the President and his Administration. The North, under the vindictive and persecuting

teachings and influences of the Radicals, began to grow suspicious of and ultimately hostile to the President whom they had elected, and such of the Cabinet as had counselled and sustained him and Mr. Lincoln. Through the summer and autumn the conflicting elements were at work. The President, conscious of right intentions, and with unabated confidence in the people, labored incessantly, night and day, in the great work of promoting peace and reëstablishing the government and the Union. Admonitions of secret operations against him, made by such of his friends as were aware of the intrigues at work, and who foresaw and deprecated the gathering storm, were not regarded. He who alone of all the Senators from the South had denounced secession in the national Capitol as treason, and its leaders as traitors; who had made such sacrifices to resist secession; who had perilled and lost so much in the Union cause; whose home had been made desolate; whose family had been broken up; whose social and political associations and friendships had been destroyed; whose children had fallen victims of the war; who himself had been a refugee from his State and an exile from his home for many years for his devotion to the Union—he would not permit himself to believe that any considerable portion of his intelligent countrymen would allow themselves to be persuaded that he was not faithful to the cause with which he was identified, and in which he had suffered so much. But with partisans these sacrifices, this sincerity, this earnest devotion to the public good and the general welfare were nothing. He revered the Constitution, respected individual and State rights, and would not knowingly trespass upon either; while his Radical opponents, under real or affected philanthropy, were disregarding of each. Claiming to be the friends of the Union, they resisted every movement made and every step taken to restore it, except upon terms unknown to the Constitution, and on conditions which they should dictate. The President was at first calumniated in whispered slanders, assailed as a Southern man whose sympathies were with the secessionists, or a Democrat who never had abandoned his original State-rights principles; a false Republican; a traitor to the party which elected him, and not to be politically trusted. Members

of Congress, of the Radical type, were in active correspondence during the entire vacation in secret defamation, sowing the seeds of enmity among his friends and supporters.

Warned though he was, the President continued incredulous. He hesitated, was disinclined to appoint Democrats to office, and would not for months consent to the removal of Radicals, however violent, unscrupulous, and malignant their opposition to him. Yet the report was everywhere circulated among the Republicans that he favored the Democrats, was appointing them to office, or was going to; that he was exerting himself to undermine and destroy the Republican party, and was using the patronage of the Government for that purpose. This unjust, untruthful, ungenerous warfare was persistently carried on for months, while he pursued the even tenor of his way, and steadily refused to adopt any retaliatory or even opposing measures. His position was anomalous. He had no sympathy with the extremes of either party, for he was neither a secessionist nor an exclusionist. With him the Union of the States and the rights of the States were living principles. He had, in 1861, resisted a dissolution of the Union by secession, and became alienated from his old political associates in consequence. In 1865 he denied the right of the central Government to exercise imperial power and exclude the erring States from rights which they had reserved and never surrendered—rights recognized and guaranteed by the Constitution and essential to our Federal system, and thereby incurred the lasting resentment of the Radicals.

President Johnson, it must be remembered, entered upon his duties as Chief Magistrate at a most critical and trying period, and under the most extraordinary and calamitous circumstances that ever befell a nation, or placed an individual at the head of a government. The chief under whose benignant guidance the war had been brought to a successful termination had been assassinated in the hour of triumph; the Union was divided in feeling, if not sundered in fact, by sectional animosity; the civil service was deranged and embarrassed by Congressional innovations and assumptions; the concentrated hate of party bitterness, fostered for years by ambitious leaders, was rife; the national relations of one-third of the States and people to the Union were

broken or suspended; the civil, industrial, and social structure of society in those States was overthrown; the contending armies were about to be disbanded; and under his ministration, these conflicting elements, which for four years had been arrayed in hostility against each other, were to be reconciled, reunited, and the people, if possible, be again made friends. With a conviction that the responsibility of good government and the welfare of a whole people were in a great measure upon him, he was not long in coming to the conclusion that persecution would not beget fraternal feeling, nor would oppression or arbitrary rule conduce to union, harmony, and peace. It would not have been surprising had there been lingering remains of resentment on his part for causeless calamities which the country had experienced, and which had fallen with peculiar severity upon himself and family. But all personal resentments were by him soon dismissed, if not forgotten, and kindness, forbearance, and tolerance were substituted, and became the policy of his Administration, as it had been the policy of his immediate predecessor. Elected with Mr. Lincoln, he inherited and adopted his measures, and also the Cabinet which had counselled and advised those measures. He inherited also as a legacy the general demoralization that war had introduced into the civil administration, by which members of Congress usurped the constitutional prerogatives of the Executive and dictated appointments. The tolerant and benevolent policy which Mr. Lincoln initiated and Mr. Johnson adopted toward the South, was opposed by the party which elected them. The extreme men of that party assumed for the Government imperial and arbitrary authority over the States and people of the South, denied them equality of rights, and shut them out from representation and many of their constitutional guarantees. Parties when in power often, and sometimes speedily, become oblivious of the principles which gave them existence and success. The Republican party had its origin in resistance to aggressions by the Federal Government, which under Pierce and Buchanan attempted to impose a constitution and obnoxious government on the people of Kansas in opposition to their wishes and will. But the same party in 1865, and subsequently, forgetful of its professions and principles in the case of Kansas ten years before,

did not scruple to disregard the popular will in each of the Southern States, and insist on dictating to the people of each in regard to their constitutions, and, in violation of the principles of freedom and self-government, broke down their State governments and placed them under central military control. It was not sufficient that the people of those States modified their constitutions and laws so as to conform to the results of the war; their governments thus modified were overthrown, and the President was denounced because he would not unite in these anti-republican movements. With him the Union of the States and the rights of the States based on popular sovereignty were cardinal points. With his opponents, an imperial central government, which should hold the States in subjection and allow them no rights but such as Congress might grant, was the aim and rule. The President recognized the States South and North as equal in political rights, and the whole people as fellow-citizens. His opponents denied these positions, refused to admit the political equality of the States, and excluded both States and people from the national legislature, where laws were enacted for the whole country. It was the misfortune of President Johnson and his Administration that those who elected him were so diametrically opposed to him on those fundamental principles which are the basis of our system, and it was probably an error that he and his old political friends did not come to prompt understanding, and unite to sustain and carry into effect those principles wherein they agreed. Had that course been pursued the Lincoln and Johnson plan of peaceful reconstruction and resumption of national authority might have been successful, and military domination avoided.

The time has not arrived perhaps for a full and impartial history of all the events of that period, when the principle of voluntary *secession* had just been suppressed by war, and the principle of central imperial *exclusion* from the National Council was being inaugurated by the victors.

The History of Emancipation

The problem of slavery was one of the most difficult issues facing the Lincoln administration. How the President, in spite of his conservatism, came to the conclusion that emancipation in the insurgent states was essential constitutes the main theme of Welles's account. The article's most interesting portions reveal the Cabinet's reactions to Lincoln's announced decision to issue an emancipation proclamation.

THE treatment and disposition of slaves who were captured, or who came within the lines of the Union armies, were in the early days of the war perplexing questions, and contributed to embarrass the Government and confuse individuals. By the Constitution, from which the Administration derived its authority, the institution of slavery was recognized, and the right of property in slaves, secured by the local law, was protected. Neither the President nor any member of the Cabinet was disposed to interfere with the institution of slavery, or believed the Government could legally interfere. Mr. Lincoln had declared previous to his election, and reiterated at his inauguration—"I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so." Notwithstanding all this, he was denounced as an abolitionist, and it was persistently maintained that it was his purpose and the purpose of his Administration to set free the slaves. The members of the Administration, though selected from the old opposing traditional parties,

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were, like the President, for preserving inviolable the constitutional compact in regard to slavery. In the controversy which followed the acquisition of territory from Mexico and the settlement and organization of Kansas, they had been united in affirming the nationality of freedom and opposing the extension of slavery into the territories. Slavery being the creature of local, not of national law, the President and the members of the Cabinet, though of different party antecedents, had each, in the Presidential elections of 1856 and 1860, advocated the policy of strict construction and of limiting human servitude to the States which authorized its existence. They denied that the Federal Government was empowered to transplant or establish slavery in the territories where it had no existence, but insisted that it was, and must remain, the creature of local municipal laws. This policy of non-action—refusal to assume ungranted power, or to exercise jurisdiction in behalf of slavery beyond the boundaries of the States, except that of returning slaves to their owners under the constitutional provision—was the extent of the abolitionism of the President and Cabinet; yet this policy of non-action and of strict construction was made the basis of disaffection and civil war. Soon after hostilities commenced fugitives from servitude began to come to Washington, and appeared on the decks of our vessels and within the lines of the Union armies. For a time the owners—secessionists as well as Union men—reclaimed their slaves under the laws and Constitution; and in many instances the fugitives were surrendered by the military commanders to their rebel masters, who invoked for this species of property the assistance and protection of the laws and the very government which they and their associates repudiated and defied. What, it began to be asked, is the status—what are the rights of these men who spurn the Constitution and are making war upon the Government? If they have thrown off their allegiance and refuse to acknowledge any obligation to the Government—if they are not citizens of the United States, as they affirm they are not, but are alien enemies—what right have they to appeal to the laws of the United States, and demand that the bondsmen who have left them and sought freedom under the flag shall be returned to their rebel masters and the rebel governments and to bondage? Could

the Administration allow itself to consider and treat these slave-owners as alien enemies? Could the Government admit that secession was so far an accomplished fact as to place those who resided within the limits of a rebel State beyond the pale of the laws which ordered slaves to be restored to their owners? If they owed allegiance to the Government, as they undoubtedly did, was it not the duty of the Government to protect them in person and property?

Application from commanders on duty soon began to reach the War and Navy Departments, asking for instructions how to proceed, and what to do with the fugitive slaves who fled to us and asked protection. This, in the early days of the insurrection, was a difficult problem, and in the new and singular state of affairs, for which no legal provision had been made, did not receive final formal decision from the Government. The Secretaries of War and the Navy, in the absence of distinct action by the Administration, were compelled to take the responsibility of giving such instructions to the officers as in their judgment was best for the public welfare. Every movement of the Executive was watched and scanned by opposing factions in the free States as earnestly as in the slave States. One party insisted that the President was tender toward the slave-owners; the other declared it to be his purpose to oppress and rob them; while his wish and intention were to obey the laws, administer them justly, protect individuals, observe State and federal as well as personal rights, and maintain the Union at all hazards and at any sacrifice. Neither the Secretary of War nor the Secretary of the Navy shrank from the responsibility of meeting and disposing of this difficult subject, so far as it devolved on them. In the conflict of authorities between the States and the General Government, the consequent quasi suspension of the laws, and the unsettled condition of affairs, no more was put upon paper than was necessary. Verbal instructions were given to the commanders not to entice slaves to come to them, but to receive, feed, and employ such as fled from any States which had passed a secession ordinance and was by force resisting the Government. Slaves from the non-seceding slave States who came to our vessels or navy-yards were restored to the owners who reclaimed them pursuant to

law. In some instances, where fugitives had deserted loyal owners in Virginia and were retained by us, and in others where they had fled from violent and outspoken rebels in Maryland, but were surrendered, this rule operated harshly. There seemed, however, for the time, no alternative. The action of the States respectively controlled the action of the departments in these cases. Those States which, by their legislatures and conventions, had assumed the right and undertaken to dissolve their connection with the Government, to secede from the Union, and were resisting by armed force the national authority, were not entitled, while in arms against the Government, to claim its assistance to subjugate and deprive persons, black or white, of their freedom. But slaveholders residing in non-seceding States, although themselves in sympathy and opinion with the secessionists, yet had committed no overt act, were under the ægis of the Federal Constitution, protected by the laws, and secure in their rights. There were some hard and afflictive cases under this ruling, when slaves were sent back to servitude under cruel and really disloyal masters on one side of the Potomac in Maryland, while the owners on the opposite side of the river in Virginia, though loyal to the Union, lost their slave property. There was sympathy for the sufferers in each case, and anathemas and wrathful indignation against the Government in both for its alleged severity, inhumanity, and injustice. Not only the opponents of the Administration, but many of its friends and supporters, who took only a superficial view of the subject, joined in these denunciations.

Every step taken by the Navy Department on this question, its instructions, and its policy, were reported to the President, who approved of them without reserve, modification, or qualification. The course of the Secretary of War was very similar, though then and when making up his annual report a few months later he was more demonstrative, and took advanced positions on the slavery question, which, if such were the fixed and determined policy of the Administration, might have been more appropriately enunciated by the President than by one of the departments. The officers of the navy conformed to the instructions and views of the Navy Department, and with, I

believe, a single exception, returned no slaves to their previous owners in the rebel States. None were repelled who came on board our ships or sought protection under the flag. In the armies there were widely differing views and practice. Some of the generals, looking to the laws and not to the Executive or department for authority, were for excluding slaves from the Union lines, and if they came, for delivering them up to their rebel masters, using in some instances Union soldiers for that purpose. Others, taking a different view and going to greater length than their instructions would warrant, invited the slaves to their standard and proclaimed freedom to all who came or were within their departments. The orders and assumptions of some of the military commanders caused uneasiness, and in several instances rendered necessary counter and annulling orders by the President. It was evident to most of the dispassionate and clear minds of the country that the secessionists had by their own acts struck a fatal blow to the institution of slavery, yet the country was not fully prepared to pronounce freedom to all slaves. The orders of such officers as Generals McClellan, Halleck, Dix, and others, prohibiting the fugitives from coming within the army lines, caused great dissatisfaction in the North without appeasing any at the South.

As late as the 19th of May, 1862, the President by proclamation annulled a document of General Hunter, proclaiming freedom to the slaves of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. In that proclamation the President said: "I further make known that whether it be competent for me as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy to declare the slaves of any State or States free, and whether at any time, in any case, it shall have become a necessity indispensable to the maintenance of the government to exercise such supposed power, are questions which under my responsibility I reserve to myself, and which I cannot feel justified in leaving to the decision of commanders in the field."

For more than a year this annoying and preplexing question had on the frontier or border States, on the Gulf of Mexico, on the Atlantic coast, and on the Potomac, embarrassed the Administration. The shield which, by the compromises of the Constitution and the laws of the country, was thrown over the in-

stitution of slavery, and the property rights of the slave owners, were respected by the Administration long after it was known that the rebels were directly and indirectly employing their slaves in the war against the Government. But as the war progressed the anti-slavery feeling increased. There was a reluctance, however, on the part of the Government to adopt measures, even under the reverses of war, which conflicted with the compromises of the Constitution. The President seemed more averse than Congress, where party feeling prevailed notwithstanding the war, to touch this delicate question. Much has been justly said and written on his philanthropic and humanitarian feelings, and it is asserted that his benevolence prompted the proclamation of emancipation. He had the kind and generous nature imputed to him, but in his official relations and in issuing the proclamation of freedom he was governed, not by sympathy for the slave, but by a sense of duty, and the obligations which as Chief Magistrate he owed to his country.

To conciliate and retain the border States, torn by intestine factions, in their rightful position, required for a period all the skill, tact, and ability of the President, aided by the best minds and talents of the country. No means had been left unemployed by the rebel leaders to detach these States from the Union, and the slavery element, in which they had a common interest with the rebels, was the instrumentality on which they chiefly relied to effect a separation. Hatred of the abolitionists and the radical portion of the Republican party was as intense in the border States as further South; but a majority of the people in that belt of States were patriotic and loved the Union, to which they clung with a devotion unsurpassed in any section. They had, moreover, a growing confidence in the President, and in their great trouble they looked to him, who was overwhelmed with the calamities of the nation and people he had been elected to govern and was striving to reconcile, for support and protection. Step by step, yet with hesitation, Congress ventured, as hostilities were prolonged and increased, to take measures restrictive of the disturbing element which originated and aggravated the war. Each and every movement was resisted by the opponents of the Administration, and on each its

friends were divided; but by degrees, though gradual, the positive element made advances. Congress delayed, however, to go to the root of the difficulty, and strike for general emancipation.

Convinced that the disturbing cause of our national difficulties must be removed in order to restore and perpetuate unity, the President conceived the idea of compensated, prospective emancipation, and for a time fostered the scheme of a voluntary movement by the border States. A part of this scheme was a plan for the deportation of the colored race; for Mr. Lincoln had a belief, amounting almost to conviction, that the two races could not long dwell together in unity and as equals in their social relations. There was, he thought, a natural antagonism between the whites and blacks which could not and ought not to be overcome. He therefore, at an early period of his administration, some time before his emancipation proclamation was projected, devised plans for the deportation and colonizing of the colored population, and especially of slaves who might thenceforward receive their freedom. In these various projects of deportation and colonization he was earnestly sustained by the Attorney-General, Mr. Bates, the Postmaster-General, Mr. Blair, and the Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Caleb Smith; but each and every device, and especially the Thompson proposition for a colony at Chiriqui, and the Senator Pomeroy scheme to transplant our negroes to Central America or the West Indies, proved signal failures.

Although there was little doubt after war commenced that chattel slavery was doomed, there was much doubt and uncertainty when and in what manner its total extinction was to be brought about. Men and parties paused when they approached the subject of setting free the laboring millions of the South, a movement fraught with consequences, immediate and remote, such as human foresight could not penetrate. The executive and legislative authorities hesitated to strike the first effective blow, yet each seconded and sustained the propositions, and advances of the other. The President, practical, sagacious, and shrewd, suggested that the border States, in view of the impending and certain fate of slavery, should avail themselves of an opportunity to set free their bondsmen, and that they should receive pecuniary

compensation for the act. Were they to take the initiative in emancipation, which they as distinct commonwealths, having each within itself entire and absolute control of the subject, could do, it would relieve the Government, which was engaged in a life struggle with the rebels in the cotton and rice growing region, of serious embarrassment in dealing with a question that was not national, but had been expressly reserved to the States. It would be the beginning of a movement that would sweep the whole South, and end in general emancipation. He therefore on the 6th of March, 1862, addressed a message to Congress, recommending that "the United States ought to coöperate with any State which may adopt gradual abolishment of slavery, giving to such State pecuniary aid," etc.

In a conference which he invited with the border State delegations a few days later—the 10th of March—he explained more in detail his views; but his policy of voluntary emancipation did not meet a favorable response. Congress, however, expressed its concurrence in the project, but did not make the necessary contingent appropriation, which would have encouraged and justified the authorities of any State that might entertain the proposition.

The policy of voluntary emancipation by the States was perseveringly pressed for some months; but not succeeding, that of general emancipation began to be entertained, though not until after fifteen months of active hostilities, during which the Government exercised extraordinary forbearance, and every effort to induce State action was a failure. In July, after the reverses before Richmond, the President visited the army at Harrison's Landing. From his observances in that visit he became convinced that the war must be prosecuted with more vigor, and that some decisive measures were necessary on the slavery question, not only to reconcile public sentiment and to consolidate and make uniform military action, but to bring the slave element to our aid instead of having it turned against us. Some of the generals assumed that they should be governed by the laws and not by military necessity and executive orders; and there was a belief, hardly a design perhaps, among a few of their indiscreet partisans, that these generals, better than the Ad-

ministration, could prescribe the course of governmental action.

General McClellan, popular with the army, which was composed of citizens who were voters and a political power in this respect, flattered himself and was persuaded by others that he, though not always consistent, could mark out a course of civil administration that would be acceptable to the whole country. In a letter of the 7th of July, 1862, written at Harrison's Landing, he proffered to President Lincoln much unasked-for political advice, some of which, if sound in principle, was extraordinary in its language and almost mandatory in its terms. Among other things he informed the President that "military government should be confined to the preservation of public order and the protection of political rights. Military power should not be allowed to interfere with the relations of servitude, either by supporting or impairing the authority of the master, except for repressing disorder as in other cases. Slaves, contraband under the act of Congress, seeking military protection, should receive it. The right of the Government to appropriate permanently to its own service claims to slave labor should be asserted, and the right of the owner to compensation therefor should be recognized."

That singular letter from the General at the head of the armies to the Chief Magistrate under whom he served struck the President painfully, but he was not insensible to any valuable salutary suggestions that were made by the military commander whom he had most trusted. The reverses before Richmond undoubtedly hastened the movement of emancipation. Until those disasters, the President had hoped the rebellion would be suppressed without disturbing the compromises of the Constitution, or requiring Federal action on a subject which was expressly reserved to the States. Returning from the headquarters of the army, which he visited on the 8th of July, and grieved with what he had witnessed, he resolved to make one more earnest effort with the delegations from the border States to initiate a policy of voluntary emancipation by those States. He prepared a carefully written speech on board the steamer before he reached Washington, which he read to the border State representatives in a conference which he invited at the executive mansion on Saturday,

the 12th of July. As had been the case with all the movements which he made in that direction, he received little encouragement at this interview, though the plan was for their benefit and the substantial interest of the whole country. The discussion, though harmonious and frank, gave him little or no hope of success, and its unpromising aspect greatly depressed him. The delegations were to give him their answer soon, but the debate left him in no doubt of its character, and he felt the necessity of adopting a different policy.

On Sunday, the 13th of July, the day following this last hopeless interview, the President invited Mr. Seward and myself to accompany him in his carriage to the funeral of an infant child of Secretary Stanton. At that time Mr. Stanton occupied for a summer residence the house of a naval officer, some two or three miles west or northwest of Georgetown. It was on this occasion and this ride that he first mentioned to Mr. Seward and myself that he had about come to the conclusion that, if the rebels persisted in their war upon the Government, it would be a necessity and a duty on our part to liberate their slaves. He was convinced, he said, that we could not carry on a successful war by longer pursuing a temporizing and forbearing policy toward those who disregarded law and Constitution, and were striving by every means to break up the Union. Decisive and extreme measures must be adopted. His reluctance to meddle with this question, around which there were thrown constitutional safeguards, and on which the whole Southern mind was sensitive, was great. He had tried various expedients to escape issuing an executive order emancipating the slaves, the last and only alternative, but it was forced upon him by the rebels themselves. He saw no escape. Turn which way he would, this disturbing element which caused the war rose up against us, and it was an insuperable obstacle to peace. He had entertained hopes that the border States, in view of what appeared to him inevitable if the war continued, would consent to some plan of prospective and compensated emancipation; but all his suggestions, some made as early as March, met with disfavor, although actual hostilities had then existed for a year. Congress was now about adjourning, and had done nothing final and conclusive—perhaps could do nothing

on this question. He had since his return from the army the last week called the members of Congress from the border States together, and presented to them the difficulties which he encountered, in hopes they would be persuaded, in the gloomy condition of affairs, to take the initiative step toward emancipation; but they hesitated, and he apprehended would do nothing. Attached as most of them and a large majority of their constituents were to what they called their labor system, they felt it would be unjust for the Government which they supported to compel them to abandon that system, while the States in flagrant rebellion retained their slaves and were spared the sacrifice. A movement toward emancipation in the border States while slavery was recognized and permitted in the rebel States would, they believed, detach many from the Union cause and strengthen the insurrection. There was, he presumed, some foundation for their apprehension. What had been done and what he had heard satisfied him that a change of policy in the conduct of the war was necessary, and that emancipation of the slaves in the rebel States must precede that in the border States. The blow must fall first and foremost on them. Slavery was doomed. This war, brought upon the country by the slave-owners, would extinguish slavery, but the border States could not be induced to lead in that measure. They would not consent to be convinced or persuaded to take the first step. Forced emancipation in the States which continued to resist the Government would of course be followed by voluntary emancipation in the loyal States, with the aid we might give them. Further efforts with the border States would, he thought, be useless. That was not the road to lead us out of this difficulty. We must take a different path. We wanted the army to strike more vigorous blows. The Administration must set the army an example, and strike at the heart of the rebellion. The country, he thought, was prepared for it. The army would be with us. War had removed constitutional obligations and restrictions with the declared rebel communities. The law required us to return the fugitives who escaped to us. This we could and must do with friends, but not with enemies. We invited all, bond and free, to desert those who were in flagrant

war upon the Union and come to us; and uniting with us they must be made free from rebel authorities and rebel masters.

If there was no constitutional authority in the Government to emancipate the slaves, neither was there any authority, specified or reserved, for the slaveholders to resist the Government or secede from it. They could not at the same time throw off the Constitution and invoke its aid. Having made war upon the Government, they were subject to the incidents and calamities of war, and it was our duty to avail ourselves of every necessary measure to maintain the Union. If the rebels did not cease their war, they must take the consequences of war. He dwelt earnestly on the gravity, importance, and delicacy of the movement, which he had approached with reluctance, but he saw no evidence of a cessation of hostilities; said he had given the subject much thought, and had about come to the conclusion that it was a military necessity, absolutely essential to the preservation of the Union. We must free the slaves or be ourselves subdued. The slaves were undeniably an element of strength to those who had their service, and we must decide whether that element should be with us or against us. For a long time the subject had lain heavy on his mind. His interview with the representatives of the border States had forced him slowly but he believed correctly to this conclusion, and this present opportunity was the first occasion he had had of mentioning to any one his convictions of what in his opinion must be our course. He wished us to state frankly, not immediately, how the proposition of emancipation struck us, in case of the continued persistent resistance to Federal authority.

Mr. Seward remarked that the subject involved consequences so vast and momentous, legal and political, he should wish to bestow on it mature reflection before advising or giving a decisive answer; but his present opinion inclined to the measure as justifiable, and perhaps he might say expedient and necessary. These were essentially my views, more matured perhaps, for I had practically been dealing with slavery from the beginning as a wrecked institution. During that ride the subject was the absorbing theme, and before separating the President requested us to

give it early, especial, and deliberate consideration, for he was earnest in the conviction that the time had arrived when decisive action must be taken; that the Government could not be justified in any longer postponing it; that it was forced upon him as a necessity—it was thrust at him from various quarters; it occupied his mind and thoughts day and night. He repeated he had about come to a conclusion, driven home to him by the conference of the preceding day, but wished to know our views and hear any suggestions either of us might make.

This was a new departure for the President. Until that Sunday, in all our previous intercourse, whenever the subject of emancipation or interference with slavery in the States, in any way or form, had been alluded to, he had been prompt and emphatic in disclaiming and disavowing any authority or right on the part of the General Government to move in it; he had been reluctant to treat the rising at the South otherwise than as an insurrection. In one or two conversations that followed within a few days, it was said that if the Southern States and people were within the pale of the Constitution, and had not absolved their connection with and obligations to it, and disavowed and resisted the laws and constituted authorities, they were entitled to all its guarantees. But it was known to the whole world that there was a war of more than a year's duration, which was being prosecuted with constantly increasing bitterness against the Government; that there was a denial and defiance of national authority by the States in rebellion, which had placed them in the attitude of belligerents—public enemies; that they must be treated as such, and abide the consequences of their own acts. If they possessed full, absolute, inherent original sovereignty, or could resume it, as they asserted they had done by their acts of secession, and become aliens, foreigners to the United States, it was not for them to claim protection and aid from the Government which they repudiated, for the continued enslavement of an unfortunate race. They and their sympathizing friends and abettors could not insist that what was a chief element of strength to them and of injury to the Union should be shielded and secured to them by the Constitution and the government which they, as enemies, sought to destroy. So long as the slave States, or any of them,

acknowledged the supremacy of the Constitution and adherence to the Government and the Union, to them was the inviolability of slavery secured and observed. The President and every member of the Cabinet considered it and treated it as a local domestic subject, the creation of municipal, not national law, appertaining to the States exclusively and respectively, and that they had never parted with, but reserved their authority over it.

The reverses before Richmond, and the formidable power and dimensions of the insurrection, which extended through all the slave States, and had combined most of them in a confederacy or league to dissolve the Union, impelled the Administration to adopt extraordinary measures, and to exercise all its power to preserve the national existence. The slaves, if not to any considerable extent armed and disciplined as soldiers, were in the service of those who were soldiers, engaged as field laborers, producers, and domestic servants, and thousands of them were in camp attending upon the armies in the field, employed as waiters, and in the construction of fortifications and intrenchments for those whose avowed object was the overthrow of the government and the dissolution of the Union.

Early in August—it has been said on Saturday, and if so it was, I think, the 2d of that month—the President called a special meeting of the Cabinet. The meeting was in the library of the executive mansion, and not in the council chamber, where the regular sessions were usually convened. All were present except Mr. Blair, who had gone to his country residence in Montgomery county. If I am not mistaken, Mr. Chase was also from some cause absent from this first meeting. The President stated that the object for which he had called us together was to submit the rough draft of a proclamation to emancipate, after a certain day, all slaves in the States which should then be in rebellion. There were, he remarked, differences in the Cabinet on the slavery question, and on emancipation, but he invited free discussion on the important step he was about to take; and to relieve each one from embarrassment, he wished it understood that the question was settled in his own mind; that he had decreed emancipation in a certain contingency, and the responsibility of the measure was his; but he desired to hear the views of his associates and

receive any suggestions, pro or con, which they might make. He had, he said, dwelt much and long on the subject, and formed his own conclusions, and had mentioned the matter in confidence to one or two of the members. Little was said by any one but the President. Mr. Bates expressed his very decided approval, but wished deportation to be coupled with emancipation. He was, it was well known, opposed to slavery. Though born in a slave State, and always residing in a slave State and among slaves, he nevertheless wished them free, and that the colored race should leave the country. It was impossible, he said, for the two races to assimilate but by amalgamation, and they could not amalgamate without degradation and demoralization to the white race. The whites might be brought down, but the negroes could not be lifted to a much higher plane than they now occupied. He had been a close observer of the influence of slavery on the enterprise and welfare of the country through a long life, had deplored its effects, and himself had given freedom to his own slaves, and wished them and their fellows in Africa, or elsewhere than in the United States. He was fully convinced that the two races could not live and thrive in social proximity. The result of any attempt to place them on terms of equality would be strife, contention, and a vicious population, as in Mexico. The whites might be debased, but the blacks could not be elevated, even by the disgusting process of mixed breeds, which was repugnant to nature and to our moral and better instincts. He therefore wished a system of deportation to accompany any scheme of emancipation. These were also the President's views.

Mr. Seward, without expressing an opinion on the merits of the question, thought it would be well to postpone the whole subject to a more auspicious period. If the proclamation were issued now, it would be received and considered as a despairing cry—a shriek from and for the Administration, rather than for freedom. The President instantly felt and appreciated the force and propriety of the suggestion. We had experienced serious disasters. Important results were in the immediate future; high hopes were entertained from army operations under Halleck and Pope, who had just taken the direction of military affairs. The President at once closed his portfolio and suspended his procla-

mation and all further proceedings on the subject of emancipation. I do not recollect that it was again alluded to in Cabinet until after the battle of Antietam, which took place on the 17th of September—six weeks later.

The disasters of the army under McClellan were not retrieved by Pope and Halleck. Dark and heavy clouds hung over the country, and the civil service was depressed in consequence of military reverses. But the spirit of the people against what they deemed the inciting cause of hostilities became more aggravated and intense by the military failures, and the demand for freedom to the slaves, which had been increasing for months, came thick and fast and from various quarters upon the Administration. Among others who were impatient under what they considered the inexcusable neglect and inaction of the President was Horace Greeley, the editor of one of the widest circulated and most influential journals in the country. Uninformed, like others, of the purposes and contemplated movements of the Government, but filled with patriotic fervor, such as a year previous had led him and men like him, possessed of more zeal than military knowledge, to insist that the army should, while not duly prepared, move on to Richmond, he now, on the 19th of August, addressed a letter, earnest but dictatorial in tone, to the President, admonishing him of public sentiment and of his duty. This letter was not sent through the mail as a friendly epistle, with the friendly suggestions and advice of a friend, but for some reason, good or bad, was published in the "New York Tribune." The effect of this publication on the ardent and unreasoning fanatical mind was to increase discontent towards the Administration. This, however, was cooled and counteracted almost immediately by the calm, deliberate, and statesmanlike answer of the President. This reply, on the 22d of August, discloses the real views and principles by which the President was governed better than any other. He said:

The sooner the national authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be—the Union as it was.

If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them.

If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them.

My paramount object is to save the Union, and not either to save or to destroy slavery.

If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.

What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union.

I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and shall do more whenever I believe doing more will help the cause.

In these brief paragraphs will be found the controlling motives, principles, and purpose of the President—the true key to his official actions on this subject. He was Chief Magistrate, to maintain, preserve, and so far as in him lay to perpetuate the Union. Slavery or emancipation was a secondary consideration, a mere incident to that great object. He did not and could not inform the distinguished journalist who took upon himself to be his mentor that there was in his portfolio a proclamation of emancipation, prepared in obedience to the national necessities, but which, for public considerations was temporarily suspended. Yet such was the fact. His sympathies were as great and his philanthropy as broad and deep as those of any one who appealed to him; but his legal and constitutional obligations were paramount. He proved himself a statesman. Many blamed him for inaction in the cause of freedom then, as subserviency to the slave oligarchy. Many have extolled his decree of emancipation since, as the kindly prompting of a generous nature. It was neither, but a sense of duty—his honest conviction, acting under the highest responsibility that was ever devolved on a Chief Magistrate—which controlled him when the impulsive were restless and the benevolent impatient. The proclamations of emancipation were not the offspring of mere humanitarianism, as

many of the superficial and thoughtless suppose, but of the highest and noblest statesmanship. Fidelity to the Union and to the Constitution, both of which were imperilled in that dark and gloomy period of the great struggle, influenced and controlled him. He was President to preserve the Union, not to destroy it, or to permit it to be destroyed; to observe the compromises and ordinances of the fundamental law, not to overthrow or discard them. It was no part of his duty or trust, whatever might be his individual sympathy, to interfere with or molest the institutions and laws of the States, or to trespass on their reserved rights, so long as they observed and respected Federal rights; but he could omit no legitimate duty to remove any obstacle which endangered the national existence. Certain States made war upon the Government in behalf of slavery, and were availing themselves of the slave element to dissolve the Union. He had Federal rights to maintain while observing the rights of the States.

Individuals and public meetings appealed to him in behalf of emancipation more earnestly as our military disasters increased. The Rev. Dr. Patton of Chicago, at the head of a deputation from the clergymen of northern Illinois, called on me on the 13th of September and requested an introduction of himself and his associates to the President, in order to urge upon him more active and decided measures in the cause of freedom. The President expressed his willingness to receive them, and after listening to their memorial he stated some of the difficulties which embarrassed him, but assured them he had not decided against proclaiming liberty to the slaves. He held the subject under advisement; it was on his mind by day and by night, more than any other. Whatever should appear to be God's will he would do.

A special Cabinet meeting was convened on Saturday, the 20th of September, when the preliminary proclamation for emancipation was again submitted. In bringing it forward on this occasion the President remarked that, though suspended for several weeks, the subject had never been lost sight of. He had in the mean time made a few verbal alterations, without changing the character of the paper, which he thought and which undoubtedly were improvements. All listened with profound

attention to the reading, and it was, I believe, assented to by every member. Mr. Bates repeated the opinions he had previously expressed in regard to the deportation of the colored race. Mr. Seward proposed two slight verbal alterations, which were adopted. A general discussion then took place, covering the whole ground—the constitutional question—the war power—the expediency and the effect of the movement. After the matter had been very fully debated, Mr. Stanton made a very emphatic speech sustaining the measure, and in closing said the act was so important, and involved consequences so vast, that he hoped each member would give distinctly and unequivocally his own individual opinion, whatever that opinion might be. Two gentlemen he thought had not been sufficiently explicit, although they had discussed the question freely, and it was understood that they concurred in the measure. He referred, he said to the Secretary of the Treasury and (hesitating a moment) the Secretary of the Navy. It was understood, I believe, by all present, that he had allusion to another member, with whom he was not in full accord.

Mr. Chase admitted that the subject had come upon him unexpectedly and with some surprise. It was a step further than he had ever proposed, but he was prepared to accept and support it. He was glad the President had made this advance, which he should sustain from his heart, and he proceeded to make an able impromptu argument in its favor.

I stated that the President did not misunderstand my position, nor any other member; that I assented most unequivocally to the measure as a war necessity, and had acted upon it.

Mr. Blair took occasion to say that he was an emancipationist from principle; that he had for years, here and in Missouri, where he formerly resided, openly advocated it, but he had doubts of the expediency of this executive action at this particular juncture. We ought not, he thought, to put in jeopardy the patriotic element in the border States, already severely tried. This proclamation would, as soon as it reached them, be likely to carry over those States to the secessionists. There were also party men in the free States who were striving to revive old party lines and distinctions, into whose hand we were putting a

club to be used against us. The measure he approved, but the time was inopportune. He should wish, therefore, to file his objections.

This, the President said, Mr. Blair could do. He had, however, considered the danger to be apprehended from the first objection mentioned, which was undoubtedly serious, but the difficulty was as great not to act as to act. There were two sides to that question. For months he had labored to get those States to move in this matter, convinced in his own mind that it was their true interest to do so, but his labors were vain. We must make the forward movement. They would acquiesce, if not immediately, soon; for they must be satisfied that slavery had received its death-blow from slave-owners—it could not survive the rebellion. As regarded the other objection, it had not much weight with him; their clubs would be used against us, take what course we might.

The question of power in the Government to act—authority to set free the slaves in the rebel States—was not, in this war for the Union, controverted or doubted by any member of the Administration. It was suggested by some that preliminary legislation would be advisable before a decisive step was taken by the Executive; but it was answered, Congress was clothed with no authority on the subject, nor was the Executive, save under the war power—military necessity—martial law—where there could be no legislation. Congress had, however, taken some action, indicating the sentiments of that body and the country.

Before reading the proclamation the President again said he felt the great responsibility of the step he was taking, both to himself and the country. It had oppressed him, and not until all other measures and expedients failed had he come to the conclusion that this element, which was arbitrarily used against us, must be brought into the Union cause. Having reached that conclusion, his decision was fixed and unalterable. The act and all its responsibilities were his alone. He had prepared the paper which he was again about to read without advice or assistance—had pondered over it for weeks, and been more confirmed in the rectitude of the measure as time passed on. There had been moments when he felt awed and overwhelmed by the

gravity and magnitude of the subject and of what might follow, but his way was now clear—he knew he was right. Among other things, he said in a somewhat subdued tone, he had looked to a Higher Power for aid and direction. He had made a vow that if God gave us the victory in the impending battle he would receive it as an indication of the Divine Will that it was his duty to go forward in the work of emancipation. In a manner half apologetic, he said this might seem strange, but there were occasions when, uncertain how to proceed—when it was not clear to his mind what he should do—he had in this way submitted the disposal of the subject to a Higher Power, and abided by what seemed the Supreme Will. Events at Sharpsburg had confirmed and strengthened his original purpose in regard to emancipation and he had no hesitation in issuing this preliminary order; the States interested would decide for themselves as to its consummation.

This was not the only occasion when he manifested the peculiar faith or trait here exhibited. It was doubtless to be attributed in a great measure to the absence of early religious culture—a want of educational advantages in his youthful, frontier life. In the wilderness of Indiana fifty years ago there were few churches, and only an occasional wandering preacher furnished the sparse population with rude religious instruction. Although his early opportunities for religious improvement had been few, there was deep-seated within him a feeling of dependence and trust in that Supreme Intelligence which rules and governs all.

Some general conversation followed the reading of the document, when the President handed it to the Secretary of State, with directions to publish it forthwith.

There were, I think, apprehensions and anxiety on the minds of every member of the Administration as to the effect which the proclamation would have on the public mind. I make an extract from a memorandum of my own on the 22d of September, which expresses my views and feelings at the time: "The subject, aside from the ethical view of the question, has, from its magnitude and its uncertain results, a solemnity and weight that oppresses me. It is a step in the progress of this war—a beginning, the

results of which will extend into the distant future. A favorable termination of the war seems more remote with every movement. Unless the rebels hasten to avail themselves of the alternative now presented—and I see little probability of it,—the end can scarcely be other than emancipation of the slaves, and subjugation of their masters, carrying with it a revolution of the social, civil, and industrial habits and condition of society in all the slave States. There is in the free States a prevailing opinion that this measure will secure a speedy peace. I cannot say that I so view it. There will be the energy of desperation on the part of the slave-owners, aided by those who sympathize with them, which with the impending pecuniary sacrifices will intensify the struggle. While, however, dark clouds are before us and around us, I do not see in the twilight of the future how the measure taken could be avoided, and I know that it is desirable it should be. It is a despotic act in the cause of the Union, and I may add of freedom.”

The immediate effect of this extraordinary and radical measure—almost revolutionary in its character—was less turbulent and exciting, North and South, than had been generally apprehended. It called out no excessive jubilation on one part, nor angry violence on the other. For a time it failed to strengthen the Administration in any section. It imparted no vigor but rather depression and weakness to the North nor strength to the secession cause in the South, where there began to be a conscious feeling of the fatal step they had taken. Mr. Blair's forebodings as to the effect on the approaching autumn elections were realized. Many who had resisted secession were not prepared to sustain the Executive in a measure which was without direct warrant from the Constitution, though adopted as a necessity to defend and preserve it and the Union from rebellious assailants, whose avowed purpose was to destroy both. The emancipationists, who had urged decisive action upon the President, relaxed for a time their energies after action was taken, and the fall elections were adverse to the Administration.

In the rebel or Confederate Government there was much empty gasconade, and many loud threats and denunciations for this executive act; but they ended in mere declamation. It had

become a conviction with the intelligent minds of the South that the rebellion had put slavery in jeopardy, and that if the rebellion was suppressed slavery would be extinguished. The proclamation brought conviction of this fact to their minds, and alarmed and weakened them.

Following the preliminary proclamation, and as a part of the plan, was the question of deporting and colonizing the colored race. This was a part of the President's scheme, and had occupied his mind some time before the project for emancipation was adopted, although the historians, biographers, and commentators have made slight, if any, allusion to it. The President, however, and a portion of his Cabinet considered them inseparable, and that deportation should accompany and be a part of the emancipation movement.

A speculating operation for colonizing and taking possession of a tract of country in Central America, known as the Chiriqui grant or purchase in Costa Rica, had been in progress under the Buchanan Administration, and greatly interested President Lincoln, who thought it might be used for colonization purposes. He had in the spring of 1861 expressed a favorable opinion of the scheme, and referred it to me for investigation, and if I approved it, to bring forward the necessary measures to carry it into effect. Without here going into details of that investigation, I became satisfied that it was a speculating, if not a swindling scheme, and so reported, and declined to further consider the subject. It was then referred to the Secretary of the Interior, a friend of the scheme and the parties. He made a very skilful and adroit report in its favor, stating that there was an abundance of the best quality of coal in the Chiriqui purchase, which a colony of emancipated negroes could mine, and recommending that such a colony should be established, and that the Navy Department should procure its supplies of fuel from that source. The President gave the project favorable consideration, and in compliance with it proposed to issue an order directing the Navy Department to procure its coal from Chiriqui, and to make an advance to the company of \$50,000 to aid in its colonizing and mining purposes. To this I wholly and entirely objected, and when the President became aware that the law re-

quired coal to be purchased by annual contract awarded to the lowest bidder, and that we had such a contract only partly executed, the scheme was abandoned. But the plan of deportation and colonization by the Government was not given up. It was pressed as an incidental and necessary part of the emancipation proceeding. The President brought the subject of deporting the freed slaves before the Cabinet on Tuesday, the 23d of September, the day succeeding his preliminary emancipation proclamation, when it was discussed at some length, and again on Friday, the 26th. There was a diversity of opinion in the Cabinet on this measure, but ultimately a majority opposed it. The President, in reluctantly giving up the Chiriqui project, declared himself opposed to the proposition of the Attorney-General, Mr. Bates, who was also opposed the Chiriqui scheme, but who read an elaborate paper in favor of compulsory emigration or deportation.

Deportation and colonization eventually died out, after a feeble and abortive effort to plant a cargo of negroes at Cow Island; but emancipation became a success.

On Tuesday, the 30th of December, the President read to the Cabinet the draft of his proclamation emancipating the slaves in the rebellious States, pursuant to his preliminary proclamation of the 22d of September, and, as usual with his public papers, invited criticism. A general debate took place that day, but without much definite point, or any new suggestion in the discussion. The President directed that copies of the paper should be made and sent to each member of the Cabinet, and ordered a special meeting on the next day, Wednesday, the 31st of December, to hear remarks and receive suggestions. At that meeting two or three verbal alterations were suggested. All but one of them were, I think, proposed by Mr. Seward. Four members, viz., Messrs. Seward, Chase, Blair, and myself, without interchanging opinions, advised that any and all exceptions of fractional parts of any State should be omitted. It was stated that, slavery being the creature of local law, no State where it existed could discriminate in its enactments so as to authorize its continuance in some counties, yet prohibit it in others. There could be no such unequal, sectional legislation in any State. But

the President, while he felt the force of the suggestion, declined to make the omission, conceiving himself committed in his preliminary proclamation. Mr. Chase proposed the felicitous closing paragraph, declaring the sincerity of the Executive in this act, believed to be an act of justice warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, and invoking for it the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

All the suggestions, written and oral, which had been made, were received by the President, who said he would consider them and complete the document. This was done, and the paper signed and published on the following day, the 1st of January, 1863.

The speculations as to the origin of the proclamation and the influence and causes which prompted the emancipation movement have been many, and some of them merely imaginary or conjectural. It has been said it was done to prevent a recognition of the Confederacy by European governments; that it was extorted by the ultra abolitionists, who threatened the Administration; that the President was overborne and subdued by appeals which the clergy and others addressed to him. Some or all of these may have tended to confirm him, but the origin was with neither. The war and war necessities had modified his views and overcome his primary, undisguised reluctance to adopt a measure for which he had no express constitutional or legal authority—nothing but absolute military necessity. The calamities of the war, which were prolonged, and the condition of national affairs, convinced him that to confer freedom on the four millions who were in bondage would be the most fatal blow he could strike against the rebellion, and the most effectual if not the only measure that would give peace and prosperity to the Union.

The period when he came to this conclusion, and decided to give by an executive act freedom to the slaves, has been a controverted question on the part of his biographers, historians, and commentators, but no specific day or influence can be named. Impressed with the importance, solemnity, and responsibility of the measure, he was slow and deliberate in adopting it. For more than a year after his inauguration, he resisted the appeals

and the threats of his ultra supporters, who urged him to use the war necessity and strike the fetters from the slave, in the confident belief that peace would be restored and the compromises of the Constitution maintained unimpaired, without resorting to this necessity. But gradually the conviction dawned upon him that the cause which led to the rebellion must be removed before harmony could prevail. For a time he indulged the hope that the border States would view the subject as he viewed it, and come to the same conclusion. If so, they in the wreck and downfall of the institution would, he thought, gladly avail themselves of the proposition of gradual and compensated emancipation. Disappointed after repeated earnest appeals addressed to the patriotism and the pecuniary interest of the States, and failing to persuade them to take the initiative by voluntarily relinquishing slavery, he was compelled to take the other and extreme alternative of addressing himself to the rebels themselves, and warning them that if they persisted in rebellion after a given date, he should adopt the policy of emancipation.

His interview with the representatives on the 12th of July, and his ineffectual appeal to them to favor a scheme for voluntary, prospective, and compensated emancipation, forced upon him the conviction that all arguments and appeals in that quarter were vain and useless, and that a different, stronger, and more ultra policy was necessary. They, and the constituency on whom they relied, were most of them Union men, but they clung to the system of productive slave labor to which they had been accustomed. Their secession opponents at the South had from the beginning taunted them with the assertion that if they adhered to the Union cause the abolitionists would set free their slaves and subvert their industrial and social system. This they had repelled, and when appealed to by the President felt that they could not sustain themselves at home if they gave in to the measure. They therefore declined the propositions he made.

It was after that last fruitless and hopeless interview with the border State representatives, on Saturday the 12th of July, that he became convinced the Government would be compelled to adopt the principle of emancipating the slaves in the rebel States in order to close the conflict. In all probability the al-

ternative of this harsher and more responsible measure toward the extreme South, in case the border States could not be persuaded to come into his project of voluntary emancipation, had been evolved in his mind before that last meeting. He had urged the project from the 6th of the preceding March, without receiving much encouragement, and the opposition and repugnance manifested at the meeting on the 12th of July satisfied him that a different and more decided policy, and in another direction, must be pursued. In this mood, and with this conviction, after his unsatisfactory interview on Saturday, he felt that he must abandon that project, and on the following day, Sunday, the 13th, introduced to Mr. Seward and myself the topic that engrossed his mind, with a request that we should give the subject of emancipating the slaves in the Southern States, after a given date, early and earnest consideration. He had not at that time fully determined on issuing a proclamation—had not entirely given up the hope that the border States might yet come into his scheme, which was obviously so much to their advantage; but it had become a remote and glimmering hope, which their written reply on the 14th of July extinguished. Not until after that date did he write his preliminary proclamation, which was, I believe, first read to the Cabinet on Saturday, the 2d of August.

The statement made and reiterated with great confidence, that this proclamation was written on a steamboat when returning from a visit to General McClellan, on the 8th of July, is a mistake. He did, there is little doubt, at that time, when returning on the steamer, write out the speech which he read to the representatives of the border States when he reached Washington. It would be unjust to him as a man, and as Chief Magistrate, to impute to him a disingenuous and a double part in his proposition to the representatives of the border States; to suppose that while he was inviting them to adopt the policy of voluntary emancipation by their respective States, he concealed from them the fact that he was pursuing a different policy, and had indeed, as represented, written a proclamation for general emancipation by the Federal Government. Nor were the two policies compatible. The truth is, he had doubted Federal authority, and therefore labored earnestly and with fidelity to

induce the border States to initiate the milder and practical policy of voluntary emancipation by State action, which they clearly had the right to do. To encourage them in this movement, he promised the influence of the Executive to give them pecuniary aid. Could they have been persuaded to act, the President would have been relieved of embarrassment, for it would have been the first step in a movement which would have eventuated in general emancipation by the undoubted, rightful legitimate State authorities. Not until the last hope of voluntary emancipation was extinguished in the interview on the 12th of July, did he relinquish his early and favorite policy, and take up the controverted and contested one of Federal action, warranted alone by military necessity.

His generous and benevolent nature was gladdened at the close by the result of his proclamation, which gave freedom to four millions in bondage, and contributed in no small degree to the suppression of the rebellion and to the preservation and perpetuation of the Union. The fruition of this measure, adopted under imperious necessity, and with responsibilities and a solemnity that few can appreciate, cheered the last days of the extraordinary man, to whom belongs the credit, as he assumed the consequences of the act, and whose untimely death the nation will ever have cause to deplore. Love for his country, its Constitution, and the Union which he had been chosen to guard, was the controlling influence that governed him in one of the most important and responsible measures ever decreed by chief magistrate or ruler.

The Capture and Release of Mason and Slidell

When Captain Charles Wilkes of the U.S.S. *San Jacinto* stopped the British mail steamer *Trent* to seize James M. Mason and John Slidell, Confederate Commissioners to Great Britain and France, an international incident resulted. The embarrassments and consequences to the Navy Department are here developed in detail by the Secretary of the Navy.

THE WAR of the rebellion dragged heavily along through the summer and autumn of 1861, its reverses but slightly relieved by some successes of McClellan in West Virginia and Stringham at Hatteras. Late in October a formidable squadron which the Navy Department had collected at Hampton Roads, with accompanying army transports, left the capes of Virginia for a destination unknown to more than half a dozen persons aside from the expedition. About the middle of November the country was made glad by the announcement that the squadron under Dupont had captured Port Royal, and that our troops were in possession of the most favored locality of the South Carolina insurgents. Almost simultaneously with this intelligence the country was electrified with rumors, which were speedily confirmed, that James M. Mason and John Slidell, two rebel emissaries, with their secretaries, were captured by Captain Wilkes, in command of the *San Jacinto*, and taken from on board the English packet steamer *Trent*, a neutral vessel, which was conveying these messengers on a hostile mission abroad. The action

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at Port Royal took place on the 7th of November; the rebel emissaries were arrested on the following day, the 8th.

Great as were the rejoicings over the achievement of Dupont, the most important victory which had then been obtained, they were for a time eclipsed by the startling news that the two rebel leaders, who had recently abandoned their seats in the Senate, and been selected by the Confederate organization to represent it abroad, and enlist foreign governments in its behalf, had been intercepted and were prisoners.

Several of the European powers, and especially England, under the mischievous intrigues of Palmerston and Russell, and France under the malign influence of Louis Napoleon, had hastened to recognize the rebels as belligerents, thereby placing them, though destitute of any acknowledged nationality, on terms of equality with the government of the United States—a government with which they had treaties and were professedly on terms of amity and friendship. The effect of this recognition was—and unquestionably was so intended—to deprive the government and people of the United States, with their navy, commerce, and large shipping interests, while the rebels had none, of the hospitalities and privileges which exist among nations at peace, and which had been extended to us by all governments prior to the rebellion. The assumed neutrality of those countries was therefore an unfriendly act, adverse to the United States, whose ships were thereby restricted in their supplies, and almost excluded from foreign ports. It was favorable to the rebels, who had neither navy, ships, nor commerce to be excluded or injured by any inhibition that might be imposed. It elevated and gave political power and importance to the conspirators, who, by the standard of those governments, were made in all respects the equals of the United States, although they had no existence or standing in the family of nations, and were neither by law nor fact entitled to nationality or belligerent rights. Hostility to free government, and unfriendliness, not to say enmity, to the American Union, actuated the men in authority in both England and France. Their sympathies, particularly those of the aristocracy of Great Britain, were with the rebels, not from any especial

regard, love, or respect for them or their cause, but from dislike of free institutions and the rising power of the great republic.

Mason and Slidell had managed to elude the blockade in October in the *Theodora*, a blockade-runner, and were landed at Cardenas in Cuba. Thence as ambassadors or commissioners they proceeded with their retinue to Havana, where they were officially and ostentatiously received and introduced by the English Consul to the Cuban authorities. The cautious and dignified Spanish grandee who was then Captain General declined to recognize the official pretensions of the emissaries but received them as strangers of distinction. Americans were not unmindful of the extraordinary and marked courtesy and attention of the British officials to these messengers, known to be on a mission hostile to our government. When, therefore, intelligence of the capture of these conspirators, who were so recently Senators, was received, intense excitement and general joy were manifested. Men of all parties and grades united in a general hallelujah over the achievement. Without pausing to inquire under what circumstances the arrest had been made, and whether the Government was in any degree compromised, the people everywhere approved it, and recognized and acknowledged Captain Wilkes as a bold, daring, and energetic officer, more efficient and vastly more deserving of applause than the more slow and deliberate men who were administering the government. The fact that these traitorous and avowed enemies of the republic, on a hostile errand to procure foreign aid for the destruction of our national unity, were taken on an English steamer, under an English flag, and from the embrace of English officials, gave additional gratification and zest to the daring act of the naval captain. From the Atlantic to the Pacific meetings were called to express the feelings of the people and their thanks to the gallant officer who had rendered this great service. Captain Wilkes, on his arrival at Boston, and as he passed through the country to Washington, was greeted with welcome and hailed as a chieftain worthy of command. A banquet was given him in the commercial metropolis of New England, which was attended by many distinguished personages, among them the Chief Magistrate of Massachusetts, the patriotic Governor Andrew, and

Chief Justice Bigelow, each of whom made speeches in honor of the hero. Publicists like Mr. Everett endorsed and justified the act. The House of Representatives at Washington, on the first day of its session, the 2d of December, by unanimous consent received, and without dissenting voice passed a resolution declaring "that the thanks of Congress are due, and are hereby tendered, to Captain Wilkes of the United States Navy, for his brave, adroit, and patriotic conduct in the arrest and detention of the traitors, James M. Mason and John Slidell." On the same day Schuyler Colfax, then a prominent member, and subsequently Speaker of the House and Vice-President of the United States, introduced a resolution which, after a recitation in the preamble that Colonel Michael Corcoran, taken prisoner on the battle field, had, after suffering other indignities, been confined by the rebel authorities in the cell of a convicted felon, made known as the wish of the House that "the President of the United States be requested to similarly confine James M. Mason, late of Virginia, now in custody in Fort Warren, until Colonel Corcoran shall be treated as all the prisoners taken by the United States on the battle field have been treated." A similar resolution in regard to Mr. Slidell was introduced by Mr. Odell, a Democratic representative from the State of New York. These resolutions of the representative body of the nation exhibit the feeling and temper of the people, and were supposed to be in contrast with, if not a rebuke to, the qualified congratulatory letter which I had written on the 30th of November, three days before. To these resolutions, and all the honors awarded to Captain Wilkes, the people responded, and were prompt to compare his energetic and effective action with the tardy and unsatisfactory movements of others at the beginning of the war.

Captain Charles Wilkes, who acquired this sudden and high renown, was an intelligent and daring officer, advanced in life, many of whose active years had been passed on shore duty, and in the preparation and publication, under the authority of Congress and at the expense of the government, of an elaborate work of several volumes, narrating the discoveries, geographical and scientific, made by an exploring expedition under his command, which was projected and sent out during the administration of

President Van Buren in 1838. He was detached from these literary and scientific labors in the spring of 1861 and ordered to proceed to the coast of Africa to relieve a Southern naval officer on that station of the command of the *San Jacinto*, and return with her to the United States. Our naval force was at that time small, on a very limited peace establishment, and the vessels, in some instances commanded by officers from the insurrectionary region, were most of them widely dispersed. Congress had adjourned without taking measures to increase or to authorize an increase of the navy, notwithstanding impending difficulties. In the strife of factions the welfare of the country and the strength and stability of the government were greatly neglected. Only three small steamers were in commission, and but two hundred and eighty seamen in all the Atlantic ports. Almost all the authorized force of vessels and men were absent in the West Indies or Gulf of Mexico, or on foreign stations. What was called the home squadron consisted of eight vessels in commission, most of them in the West Indies or the Gulf of Mexico, and were all of them, with the intervening insurrectionary States, nearly as unavailable and remote as the ships on the coast of Europe. Among both naval and military officers of the South there was great demoralization, affecting the discipline of the service and impairing public confidence. Many of them, under the specious but delusive and mistaken idea that obedience to the local State governments, even in their illegal enactments against national unity and authority, was paramount to all obligations to the Federal Government, had thrown up their commissions and abandoned the service. The new Administration, unaware of the extent of the conspiracy, and wholly unprepared by needful legislation, or previous executive action for the emergency, was compelled to meet the crisis, and on its own responsibility take instant measures for the preservation of the national existence. Called, as most of them were, from private life to their new positions, and under confident assurances from leading minds on both sides that an adjustment of difficulties would take place without a conflict, the men administering the government delayed measures of a belligerent character until the last moment. When it became evident that the extreme secessionists had ob-

tained control of the rebel State organizations, that they were determined on national dismemberment, and that hostilities could scarcely be avoided, precautionary measures were adopted involving among other things an entire change of naval management. Before a blockade had been declared or Sumter assaulted orders were sent, on the 8th of April, to Commodore C. H. Bell, who was in command in the Mediterranean, to break up the European squadron and return with his command to the United States. A difficulty existed in regard to the withdrawal of the African squadron, in consequence of treaty stipulations with Great Britain, by which we were obliged to maintain a specified force on the coast of Africa for the suppression of the slave trade. But higher duties in the great impending crisis overrode in this instance treaty stipulations, and the demand for ships and men on our own coast was so imperative that the Navy Department took the responsibility after the blockade was declared of withdrawing the African squadron, with the exception of a single sloop of war. Orders to this effect were sent to Commodore Inman, in command, on the 9th of May, with directions to return as soon as practicable with all his force except the *Saratoga*. One of the vessels of this squadron was the *San Jacinto*, commanded by Captain T. A. Dornin. This officer was a citizen of Maryland, and it was his misfortune that a portion of his family were early and active secessionists. What were his own opinions and feelings on the absorbing questions that were disturbing and dividing the country, and what would be his course, it was impossible to ascertain, nor could inquiry well be made. The subject was one of extreme delicacy. To question the fidelity of a faithful officer, and thus cast suspicion on his integrity, would be harsh and severe; to continue him in command without certain assurance of his fidelity, when so many from his section were deserting, would not be good government, and in case of disaster would have been considered censurable and doubtless condemned as bad administration. There had been infidelity and the worst of treachery on the part of officers of the Treasury in the revenue marine, who not only deserted, but betrayed their trust, and perfidiously turned over their vessels and commands to the rebels. Great power is necessarily vested in a naval commander

over his subordinates. His orders are absolute. To resist or oppose them is mutiny. Such an officer might, if disposed, run his vessel into a rebel port and deliver her into the possession of the secessionists. Apprehensions of such a proceeding were entertained. Naval discipline requires from the crew implicit obedience. When sectionalism was rampant, and whole communities were in arms against the government, and men most honored and of the highest standing in the civil service were unmindful of their allegiance, and when the governments of States were arraying themselves in opposition to the Federal authority, great caution and circumspection in regard to all officers of the South in responsible positions were necessary, and especially those whose families and kindred were embarked in the rebellion. It should be said, however, to the honor and credit of the navy, that though many officers, under a mistaken sense of duty to their local government on questions of national concern, threw up their commissions and left the service, none of them were guilty of the perfidy of Twiggs, and of those officers of the revenue marine who broke faith, betrayed their trust, and transferred to the insurgents the vessels which were confided to them. Harsh as was the proceeding, there was no alternative but that of relieving the sectional officers whose opinions and views were unknown, as was done in the case of the commander of the *San Jacinto*. It is due to Captain Dornin to say that he remained loyal to the government.

Captain Wilkes, who was ordered to relieve Captain Dornin, arrived at Fernando Po and took command of the *San Jacinto* in August. Touching at St. Vincent on his return in September, he crossed over and cruised in the West Indies and Caribbean sea in search of the *Sumter* and other rebel privateers if any were abroad. At Cienfuegos, on the south coast of Cuba, he was informed that Messrs. Mason and Slidell had on the night of the 12th of October secretly and successfully run the blockade, and were on a hostile errand against the government. Learning that they were to take passage on the *Trent*, an English packet steamer—a merchant vessel—Captain Wilkes proceeded with the *San Jacinto* to the old Bahama channel, and took position at a point where it is contracted, in order to intercept and search

the professedly neutral vessel which in disregard of neutral obligations was carrying these avowed enemies of his country on a hostile errand. The English government had, by recognizing the rebels as belligerents and placing them on terms of equality with the United States, left no doubt that he possessed the unquestioned belligerent right of search, and, if contraband were found, to capture. He exercised and enforced the right by boarding on the 8th of November off the light-house of Paredon del Grande, and searching the British packet, and found, after some equivocation by the captain of the *Trent*, these rebel commissioners who were "bent on mischievous and traitorous errands against our country." Written despatches, he became satisfied from an examination of international and British authorities, were contraband, and liable with the vessel which conveyed them to seizure. Without searching for and seizing papers, he says, he considered these emissaries of the rebels as the "embodiment" of despatches, was convinced that their mission was adverse to the Union and criminally hostile to his government; he had consequently no hesitation in seizing them. But while seizing the emissaries he, for reasons which to him seemed sufficient, omitted to make prize of the *Trent*, and send her and the emissaries with the despatches into the courts for adjudication. His motive in this omission was disinterested and generous, but it was an error which, under the subsequent imperious demands of the English government, was made to vitiate his proceedings. The right of a naval commander to arrest an ambassador or emissary on a hostile mission against his government from on board a neutral vessel may be a controverted question, but there is no doubt that a different tribunal than that of the quarter-deck should decide on that as on the legality of all captures, and as to what is contraband. Captain Wilkes was satisfied he had the right to capture vessels with written despatches; he considered these messengers on a hostile errand were the embodiment of despatches, and consequently amenable to capture, and the neutral vessel in which they were embarked a good prize; but arresting the commissioners, he forbore to seize the *Trent*, and send her, with the commissioners whose transportation violated her neutrality, into the courts for adjudication.

Mason and Slidell, the two rebel emissaries thus arrested, were men of ability, but of different habits, temperaments, and mental calibre. Mason was ardent, impetuous, and arrogant; Slidell was crafty, cool, and designing. Each had been active, conspicuous, and mischievous in fomenting political disturbance and forwarding the secession movement. Mason, inflated with the supercilious assumption of the superior capacity and higher order of statemanship which prevailed in the Old Dominion, had not at first proposed or intended a division of the Union, but that Virginia, "the Mother of States," should on great occasions be the mediator or mentor, and direct the course of her co-States and the Union. State rights meant with him Virginia rights; republican government was found in the ancient commonwealth, whose statesmen in his view framed the Constitution and were the chief architects of the Federal Government. Virginia had moreover furnished most of the earlier Presidents. His dislike and contempt of the Yankees he did not conceal, but took pride in proclaiming. In legislation he was on all party questions—and with him questions generally assumed a party character—like most modern Virginians in office, a sectionalist of narrow views, which, except on the subject of slavery, scarcely extended beyond the boundaries of Virginia. Professing a deep regard for State rights, and when he entered the Senate profound veneration for the Federal Constitution, which he insisted must be strictly and literally construed, he nevertheless introduced a bill for the capture and rendition of fugitive slaves—a measure that was more arbitrary and centralizing than any ever previously proposed by the ultra consolidationists of Massachusetts. It was a gratification to him to impose the offensive provisions of that questionable constitutional enactment upon the law-abiding people of the non-slaveholding States. Although a manifest stretch of Federal authority, this measure, obnoxious to freemen, was under the exaction of party discipline, and what was called the spirit of compromise, assented to and adopted as a concession by the timid and calculating time-savers of the period. This concession, instead of allaying sectional animosity, which was the excuse of those who in the non-slaveholding States gave in support, only increased it, and the arrogance of those

who procured the enactment. Mason and his associates were confirmed, by the tame acquiescence of leading party men of the North in this measure, in the silly idea that the people of the free States were without much political principle, subservient and submissive—mere hucksters, immersed in trade and money-getting—engaged in menial manual labor, like the servile race in Virginia—about as destitute of any just pretension to statesmanship and manly independence—consequently unfit to make laws or administer the government, and incapable of properly managing public affairs. A visit which he made to Boston after his success in imposing on the people the fugitive slave law, where he was received and treated with sycophantic adulation, convinced him the Yankees were deficient in manly spirit, and needed Virginians to govern and inculcate in them self-respect.

Descended himself from one of the old and wealthy families which had given laws and government to Virginia, he prided himself on hereditary honors and the nobility of blood. It was this, he assumed, which had made the royal colony of Virginia a favored province in colonial times; and opportunities in the war of independence, and subsequently in the organization of the national government, had developed the superior talents of her cavaliers and proved them to be heroes and statesmen.

Mason was a pretty correct representative and exponent of the thought and sentiment of the people of his State at the beginning of the war. For several months in the early part of 1861, it was alike ludicrous and painful to witness the self-sufficiency, inaction, and supercilious assumption of the Virginia Convention, then assembled in Richmond. That assemblage, which met in February, lingered through March and into April, idle spectators of the progress of the rebellion, in the vain and preposterous expectation that Virginia, whose statesmen maintained as a fundamental principle the political equality of the States, would be appealed to, and her Convention constituted an umpire to arbitrate between the Federal Government and the insurrectionary States—as if Virginia occupied a higher position than the others. That Convention remained in session for weeks, buttoned up in its dignity and culpably inert, waiting to

advise the President that he must not presume to perform his whole executive duties—that the national government was a failure, and that a revision of the Constitution, with “new guarantees” for the South and for slavery, was indispensable to pacification. The Constitution under which the country had grown and prospered for seventy years, as no other country in the world had in so brief a period ever grown and prospered, which had been extolled by Virginians so long as Virginia was in the ascendant and had a controlling voice in the administration, was insufficient with a Republican chief magistrate for whom Virginia had not voted, and was wholly impotent for present excited party necessities. Virginia, therefore, through her Convention, did nothing, but waited in silent dignity to inform the President, so soon as he should appeal to that body for instruction, that a national convention must be called to incorporate “new guarantees” in the fundamental law for the protection and security of the South. If in the mean time he attempted to exercise the authority with which he was invested, and in the legitimate discharge of his duties should undertake to provision and reinforce Fort Sumter in the harbor of Charleston, in the sovereign State of South Carolina, he was told that Virginia and her Union Convention, elected by a majority of sixty thousand over the secessionists, would forthwith make common cause with South Carolina. Such was the intelligence communicated to President Lincoln on the 4th of April, 1861, just one month after his inauguration, by a messenger deputed to convey to him and the Administration information of the attitude and purpose of the Union Convention of Virginia. The counsels and statesmanship of the Tylers and Floyds and Masons prevailed in 1861. They were in patriotism and good sense in strong contrast with the practical wisdom of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and others of an earlier period. The Virginia of the middle of the nineteenth century was not the Virginia of 1776 and 1800, in position, mind, or character.

President Lincoln listened with amazement to the statements of the representatives whom the Union men in the Richmond Convention had deputed to convey to him their views and the reasons why they remained inactive. The fact that such an

assemblage, composed of professed Union men, had been convened in the principal border State, professedly to sustain the Union, had delayed decisive action on his part, in the hope that wisdom, patriotism, and fidelity to the government would so mark their course as to check insurrection and strengthen the Administration. But the long-continued and idle session of feeble but self-presuming minds, instead of benefiting the Union cause which they had been elected to promote, became a hindrance and embarrassment. He had been legally and constitutionally elected Chief Magistrate, and was sworn to discharge his duties in conformity to law, not under the directions of the Virginia Convention, nor with a view to a National Convention or a revision of the Constitution, nor to establish "new guarantees" for any section or party.

Mason, though violent in his sectional demands and ultimately an extreme secessionist, had not anticipated that our federal system would be broken up by these requirements; but inspired by Calhoun, with whom he was associated in the Senate during the last two or three years of that gentleman's life, he entertained schemes to strengthen the waning fortunes of the South, so long in the ascendant, by what was denominated "new guarantees," which were to be incorporated and unalterably fixed in the Constitution. The scheme of "new guarantees," originally a device to secure and perpetuate sectional power for the South, became subsequently, after the rebellion was suppressed, the party battle-cry and engine of their radical opponents in their centralizing operations in the opposite direction. With his low estimate of the spirit and courage of the Yankees, confirmed by the submissive obsequiousness of the Bostonians already mentioned, and the omission of Congress to make preparation to enforce national authority, Mason expected the mandate of Virginia through her Union Convention, which he and Tyler had labored to bring about, would be effective with the Administration, or if a collision took place at Sumter, that there would be but a feeble exhibit against the matured and well-organized force of the insurrectionists. The national uprising when the flag was assaulted astonished him, but from his previous arrogance, threats, and audacity, no alternative was

left him except to unite with South Carolina, and he became engulfed with and fully committed to the extreme secessionists. Although not possessed of diplomatic talent, or calculated to make a very profound impression in England, his former official position, his name and State made his appointment acceptable to those whom he was chosen to represent.

John Slidell, a native of New York, who had emigrated to and accumulated a great fortune in New Orleans, was inherently an opponent of our federal system and of popular government. Mason had an aversion to the Yankees and did not conceal it. Slidell's dislike of popular government and of the participation of the masses in administration was not merely sectional but general. He had little sympathy with the people North or South, but did not openly avow his want of confidence in them or his low estimate of their intelligence and capability for self-government. Although associated with the Democratic party and of humble origin, he was from principle and conviction, fostered by political and pecuniary success, a centralist, an aristocrat, and an advocate of a strong government. In his estimation our federative system was a political, and would prove to be an absolute failure. With this belief he thought the sooner the Union was dissolved, and governments with more circumscribed territory but clothed with ample powers established, the better for all. The doctrine that the people can and will govern wisely and well, he deemed a fallacy that must sooner or later be corrected. They were to be governed, and there must be power in the government to govern them and compel obedience. He was one of a class of politicians, more numerous probably than is supposed, who are centralists in feeling, though democratic in their professions and associations. The organizations which grew up under our colonial system were admitted to have been studied and improved when they threw off British allegiance. The march of power is onward. During the Revolutionary war a common cause and foreign enemies had banded the colonies together, and made the old Articles of Confederation, which all knew was only a league, answer for a general government. But, relieved from outward pressure after the peace of 1783, discord prevailed, and the confederation was found weak and inefficient.

The States on that low standard could not harmonize and have effective unity and strength. More power was needed, and the Federal Constitution, with greater and more clearly defined but still insufficient power, was substituted. This was another step toward a more efficient and better government. For a time, when there were but three or four millions of people with a limited territory, this had answered the purpose. But its day was about over. In his view and that of his class it was impossible for our expanded domain and increased population to long continue under one central head. If this country is to have one general government, its powers cannot be restricted, nor those administering it kept within any arbitrary written constitutional limitations. Scope and elasticity are essential. There must be homogeneity if we would have nationality. The federal system of divided sovereignty between the general and State governments, with a varied climate, dissimilarity in the institutions of the States, in their productive industry, in the condition of society and the structure of the local government, are all so conflicting that the system must if not made stronger fall to pieces. The theory that a laboring population without commerce and wealth can exercise the powers of government might be carried out in a small and purely agricultural community of limited wants; but it was absurd to suppose that those engaged in daily manual labor can comprehend and provide for the great commercial and manufacturing necessities of a continent, or develop the resources and manage the finances of a great nation. There must, by the theory of Slidell and his school, which is substantially that of Hamilton, be a governing and governed class. Slidell, like all men of that political faith, expected to be one of the former and was not scrupulous as to the means by which he obtained power. The immense frauds and corruption which have since disgraced the elections of Louisiana, and, alas! too many of the States, destroying confidence in the integrity and fairness of elections, may be traced in a great degree to John Slidell. If he had not the bold audacity of Jefferson Davis, nor the impetuous arrogance of Mason, he was quite as unscrupulous, and had the more crafty, subtle, and scheming qualities which are insinuating, and which influence fancied leaders in their intrigues and

aspirations. If not the prominent man in the rebellion, he was, perhaps beyond any other, the mischievous and in its inception one of the controlling minds in the secession conspiracy.

The rebels had expected, not without reason, early recognition by and assistance from foreign governments, particularly England and France. These two lately prominent Senators—one from “the Old Dominion,” the “Mother of States,” ancient Virginia, the principal border commonwealth; the other from the wealthy planting and commercial State of Louisiana, himself a resident of New Orleans, the emporium of the great central valley of the Union—itsself an empire—were not inappropriately selected to represent the proposed new confederacy—the former in England, the other in France.

In the general gratification which was felt and expressed, when intelligence of their arrest was received, the Administration fully sympathized; but there were unsettled and controverted questions attending the proceeding which, if England were captious and pugnacious, would be likely to cause serious embarrassment. The President, with whom I had an interview immediately on receiving information that the emissaries were captured and on board the *San Jacinto*, before consultation with any other member of the Cabinet, discussed with me some of the difficult points presented. His chief anxiety—for his attention had never been turned to admiralty law and naval captures—was as to the disposition of the prisoners, who, to use his own expression, would be elephants on our hands, that we could not easily dispose of. Public indignation was so overwhelming against the chief conspirators, that he feared it would be difficult to prevent severe and exemplary punishment, which he always deprecated.

The subject came early before the Cabinet for consideration, when it appeared that Captain Wilkes had acted on his own responsibility in making the arrest, without instruction or suggestion from the Government. His official reports confirmed this. These reports and the particulars of the capture had not then been received. The information or rumor did not call for immediate action, nor until we had the official reports could any be intelligently taken. There was joy and gratulation that the messengers of mischief were arrested, but the question of the

legality or illegality of the proceeding was but slightly alluded to. Discussion of these topics and decision were postponed until the whole facts were presented.

The San Jacinto, touching first at Hampton Roads, arrived in New York on the 18th of November. Had the Trent with the hostile emissaries and their despatches, been brought in as prize, the case would have gone into the courts for adjudication, and, from what has transpired, not unlikely thence have passed into the region of diplomacy; but the Trent not having been captured, the prisoners went summarily into the custody of the United States Marshal, who by order of the Secretary of State accompanied them in the San Jacinto to Boston, and on the 24th of November delivered them to Colonel Dimmick, keeper of Fort Warren.

The Government in the mean time having come to no conclusion, it devolved on me after receiving the reports of Captain Wilkes, which had been studiously and carefully prepared, to make the first public communication and take the first official step, by acknowledging their reception, recognizing his act, and either to congratulate or censure him on his achievement. Besides this, I was under the necessity of communicating in my annual report to the President, just then in preparation, a transaction of this magnitude and importance connected with the navy and the Navy Department, that he might at his discretion present it in his message to Congress, about to convene, and to the country. There was some diversity of opinion in the Cabinet on the proceedings in the capture of these men and the consequences which might grow out of it. There were, besides any irregularity on the part of Captain Wilkes, points in regard to the obligations of neutrals and the rights of belligerents not clearly defined, which, in the excited condition of the public mind, were but lightly discussed or considered by the press or people. It was with them sufficient that these messengers on an errand hostile to the government were prisoners in our possession. They were rebel conspirators by our own laws. By international law, after foreign governments recognized the rebels as belligerents, they were public enemies, as much so as if they had been military officers in uniform that were being transported on this neutral

vessel, and they were on a mission more harmful. In what manner the English Ministry, notoriously in sympathy with the rebels, would receive the intelligence and treat the proceedings, which were in some respects irregular, was a matter of interest and doubt. If the precedents and example which England had furnished under somewhat similar circumstances were regarded, she could consistently take no serious exceptions. But the unfriendly and almost unneutral course which Great Britain had pursued toward our government, led the more cautious and considerate to apprehend she would presume upon our domestic difficulties and be exacting.

The Administration, until there were returns from England, could not anticipate that she would avail herself of any irregularity to take a hostile attitude. If the naval officer for humane reasons had omitted to make prize of the Trent, which vessel in violation of neutral obligations was knowingly conveying public enemies of the United States on a hostile mission, that was in itself no cause of offense to Great Britain, though a technical error might have been committed. Had our country been united and this occurrence taken place with Spain or some other foreign power, England would not have been likely, without inquiry, communication, or waiting for explanation, or ascertaining whether the proceeding was authorized by our Government, to have made instant preparation for war. But unfortunately our country was then crippled, and Palmerston and Russell well knew it. The Administration felt that we were in no condition to embark in a foreign war, whatever might be the justice of our cause.

The general indignation against England was so great at the time, that a conflict with her would not have been unacceptable to many. Concession to her was denounced, and the act of Wilkes applauded, regardless of consequences. The people, if not less earnest than the Administration, were more impulsive and headlong. The Government was criticised as slow and hesitating, while the people were determined. Men acting without responsibility can be not only determined but boisterous. While the Administration was deliberate and cautious in its movements, it was as determined and firm as those who assailed it.

Among the difficulties to be met was that of so responding to Captain Wilkes, who was the hero of the day, as not to repress the national enthusiasm. On the part of the Navy Department it was especially important that no step should be taken which would deter officers from a vigilant and energetic discharge of their delicate and responsible duties. A long interval of peace and a strict observance of the rights of neutrals, rigidly enforced, had led many officers to doubt and distrust their legitimate authority and their more comprehensive duty in war. They were at first reluctant to exercise the unquestioned belligerent right of search, detention, and capture of neutrals that violated neutral obligations, lest they might be held personally responsible. Some very unfortunate mistakes were committed early in consequence of this reluctance, by which blockade-runners and vessels with contraband escaped. And it was felt to be impolitic, while enjoining and stimulating officers to discharge their duty, to reflect upon the audacity of Wilkes, who might have gone to the other extreme. It was not difficult to compliment his intelligence, ability, decision, and firmness—all of which qualities he had displayed, whatever mistakes or errors of judgment were committed. The unsettled and controverted questions were, by his summary proceedings and quarter-deck adjudications, carried beyond the courts to which matters of prize and naval capture should be submitted. Nevertheless the Navy Department was bound to take cognizance of the act, and to do this in such a way as not to compromise the Government, nor to run counter to public feeling and chill the prevailing patriotic sentiment, nor to wound the feelings of an officer who in his zeal to render a great service might have transcended his authority. On the other hand, it would not do to sanction or give countenance to the violation of neutral obligations in transporting known public enemies under a professedly neutral flag. These were some of the perplexing and embarrassing points to be met and mentioned in my official letter to Captain Wilkes, and in my annual report, in that disturbed and excited condition of our foreign and domestic affairs.

Mason and Slidell were delivered over from the San Jacinto to Fort Warren, in Boston harbor, as already mentioned, on the

24th of November; and the Administration having come to no conclusion, I on the 30th addressed the following letter to Captain Wilkes:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, Nov. 30, 1861.

Captain CHARLES WILKES,
commanding U.S.S. San Jacinto, Boston.

DEAR SIR:

I congratulate you on your safe arrival, and especially do I congratulate you on the great public service you have rendered in the capture of the rebel commissioners Messrs. Mason and Slidell, who have been conspicuous in the conspiracy to dissolve the Union; and it is well known that, when seized by you, they were on a mission hostile to the Government and the country.

Your conduct in seizing these public enemies was marked by intelligence, ability, decision, and firmness, and has the emphatic approval of this Department. It is not necessary that I should in this communication—which is intended to be one of congratulation to yourself, officers and crew—express an opinion on the course pursued in omitting to capture the vessel which had these public enemies on board, further than to say that the forbearance exercised in this instance must not be permitted to constitute a precedent hereafter for infractions of neutral obligations.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES.

At the same time I, in the following extract, presented the subject, with the yearly transactions of the navy, in my annual report to the President and the country, embracing the same general views:

The prompt and decisive action of Captain Wilkes on this occasion merited and received the emphatic approval of the Department; and if a too generous forbearance was exhibited by him in not capturing the vessel which had these rebel enemies on board, it may, in view of the special circumstances and of its patriotic motives, be excused; but it must by no means be permitted to constitute a precedent

hereafter for the treatment of any case of similar infraction of neutral obligations by foreign vessels engaged in commerce or the carrying trade.

The President did not deem it expedient to allude to this subject in his message, not having received word from England, but he personally expressed his cordial approval of my letter and report, which he thought were well timed and would be satisfactory and unexceptionable to all concerned. There was in neither the letter nor report any positive disapproval of the proceedings of Captain Wilkes, unless the allusion to his forbearance toward the Trent, which vessel had disregarded neutral obligations, be deemed such. No mention was made of the neglect to search for and seize despatches. Some there were who thought there should have been no reserve in the thanks, and excepted to the qualified congratulations to the officer. The House of Representatives, which convened three days after my letter was published, took occasion on the first day of the session, as already mentioned, by a unanimous vote, to tender "the thanks of Congress to Captain Wilkes for his arrest of the traitors Slidell and Mason."

The rebels were convulsed with indignation and mortified rage when they heard that the embassy from which so much was expected had been intercepted, and that the commissioners after escaping the blockade were prisoners. But their wrath was soon assuaged in the belief that the capture of the conspirators on an English vessel would prove a special dispensation in favor of the rebellion. The sympathy of the English Ministry in behalf of the secessionists was well understood, and the delay to recognize the Confederacy had been a vexation. Nor were these expectations without foundation, for on reception of the information that the belligerent emissaries had been taken from the neutral steamer Trent, the English Government, on mere *ex parte* rumor, commenced immediate preparations for war. Troops, arms, and munitions were ordered forthwith to Canada; the British North American and West Indian squadrons were at once increased, and by a royal proclamation the disposal of arms and the shipment of saltpetre and sales of war supplies

were prohibited. Under these warlike demonstrations of the Ministry, on the claim that there had been an affront to the British flag, the act of Wilkes, which had abundant precedents in British naval annals, was denounced as an outrage and insult. The people of England were aroused by exaggerated misrepresentations to intense excitement, and a peremptory demand was made by the English Government for the immediate and unconditional delivery of these belligerent messengers, guilty of treason to their country, and on a hostile errand against it, to the protection of the English flag.

Under adverse circumstances, a compliance with this peremptory demand accompanied by warlike preparations was deemed expedient. The Secretary of State, whose gratification that his old senatorial associates had been intercepted on their hostile errand was unsurpassed, had discredited every suggestion that Great Britain would avail herself of any technical error of the officer, and take serious exception to the proceeding. It was, he claimed, in conformity with British ruling and British practice; and if the commander of the *San Jacinto* had erred in permitting the *Trent* to proceed, it was not for that government to take advantage of his mistaken generosity by which they had been benefited. But on the 21st of December Earl Russell's despatch was received, and Mr. Seward felt that the country, struggling to maintain the national existence, was not in a condition to engage in a foreign war. It was an occasion when forbearance was necessary. Although an ungracious task, it gave the Secretary of State an opportunity to display that diplomatic ability, tact, and skill for which he was eminently distinguished, in a despatch which had the effect of conciliating public feeling, allaying apprehended discontent, disappointing the rebels, and compelling the English Ministry to refrain from further open belligerent operations.

It is not the object of this article to discuss the merits of any of the several questions, domestic and international, that were involved in these proceedings. They are purposely avoided, for they belong to the publicists. From the turn ultimately taken, British precedents appear to have been reversed, and points of international law which had been long in dispute are likely to

be finally settled on American principles. My purpose has been to relate facts connected with governmental proceedings, some of which have not in all respects been correctly stated or rightly understood. There were from the first honest differences in relation to the rectitude and legality of the doings of the naval officer, involving, as already mentioned, belligerent rights and neutral obligations.

The Trent, a neutral vessel, had taken on board and was conveying messengers or commissioners, whom its captain and all others knew to be on an errand hostile to the United States. This was considered such an infraction of neutral obligations as rendered the Trent liable to seizure. It was for the courts to decide whether the vessel engaged in this unfriendly act, in derogation of neutrality, was or was not good prize, and subject to condemnation, or whether the officer who stopped and searched her and seized the messengers of evil had probable cause to justify his act. Whether Captain Wilkes was justifiable at this stage of the proceedings in arresting these pretended ambassadors of an organization which had no legal existence among nations, and taking upon himself the right to adjudicate the question, and not only to adjudicate but the executive power to relinquish the prize, were matters that belonged to the courts, publicists, and other branches of the government, rather than the Navy Department. In the then condition of affairs, foreign and domestic, and especially the state of public feeling in the United States, I did not, in my letter of congratulation, deem it advisable to "express an opinion on the course pursued in omitting to capture the vessel," and I so explicitly and in direct but mild and considerate terms stated; but that such an infraction of neutral obligations as that committed by the Trent, and which Captain Wilkes had permitted to pass unpunished, must not be made a precedent in future proceedings.

When the emissaries were delivered over to the custody of the marshal, and were transferred to Fort Warren, the disposition of the prisoners became a political and diplomatic rather than a naval question. The capture was never adjudicated; the whole subject passed over the courts into the region of diplomacy.

Had the English Ministry, with customary courtesy, waited to ascertain whether the prisoners were arrested by order of our Government, or had they taken no harsh exceptions to what in its worst form was but an error of judgment on the part of an officer vigilant to discharge his duty, and left these rebel conspirators, who were citizens of the United States, with the Government of the United States, Mason and Slidell would, as President Lincoln remarked in his first interview with me on the day when information of the arrest was received, have been indeed elephants on our hands. But the peremptory demand for their restoration to the protection of Great Britain, accompanied with warlike demonstrations, to rescue them from amenability to the violated laws of their country, relieved, even if it humiliated us, of the "elephants." The surrender of the prisoners to the imperious demands of England, and the adroit despatch of the Secretary of State, preserved peace, which at the time was with us a national necessity. Of the strict analogy or parallel between British impressment of American seamen on board of American vessels, whom England for years forced into her service, and compelled under the lash to fight the battles of England, and the arrest by an American officer of American criminals on a hostile errand against our government, embarked on a professed neutral vessel, it is not necessary in this place to make any extended remarks. It may be said, however, that the hundreds of American seamen impressed by England during a long series of years, were not public enemies of that country on a hostile mission against Great Britain. They were Americans, our countrymen, peaceably employed in their profession, constituting parts, and often essential parts, of the crews of the vessels from which they were torn. It is not required to say how unlike to the case of these humble American seamen, serving for wages on an American vessel, was that of Mason and Slidell, insurgents but public belligerent enemies, who had been officially and ostentatiously entertained by the English consul at Havana, and were, made prisoners by Wilkes, being transported in their assumed official capacity on board the English neutral steamer Trent. The Queen, in her proclamation of neutrality, had warned her "loving subjects" against "carrying officers, soldiers, despatches,

arms," etc., and assured them if they did so they would "incur and be liable to the several penalties and consequences by the said [English] statutes or by the law of nations."

The English government and people were not insensible to the facts when presented, and felt rebuked by the contrast between the action of the two governments. The result was, the mission of these conspirators, undertaken with such high pretensions, was rendered abortive and fruitless. Official neglect, and, as they claimed, indifference and discourtesy attended them. The Ministry, after what had transpired, could not, whatever were their sympathies with the rebels, foster these men, or receive and treat them as ambassadors from a legitimate government. They therefore accomplished nothing at the courts by which they strove to be recognized, but were slighted and avoided. Each lingered a suppliant near the government to which he had been sent, unrecognized and disregarded.

When the rebellion was suppressed they found themselves homeless and aliens. Mason left England and had a vagabond residence of two or three years in Canada. Some time after the war closed he came quietly and humbly to Virginia, a broken-down old man, and finding his once pleasant home in the valley of the Shenandoah desolated by war, he retired to the vicinity of Alexandria, where he died an obscure and miserable death in April, 1871.

Slidell, disappointed, worn down and mortified, sought from President Johnson pardon and safe passport to revisit this country, but was told he could have no special privileges, and if he returned he must not expect exemption above others. He therefore spent the rest of his days in exile, passing the remnant of a vicious and intriguing career in reading French fictions, and finally died in London in July, 1871—three months after his associate, Mason, had been entombed.

(Continued from front flap)

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